This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

**Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

**About Google Book Search**

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

HN 5JK4 2

Digitized by Google

KF14708

Class C 43 Book Em 6

GENERAL THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY
LET THERE BE LIGHT
INSTITUTED 1860
BOSTON, MASS

*Presented by*
Mrs E. P. A. Goodhue

Digitized by Google

psa u/m

D. GOODHUE.
Clergyman
LONDONDERRY. VT.
Read.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

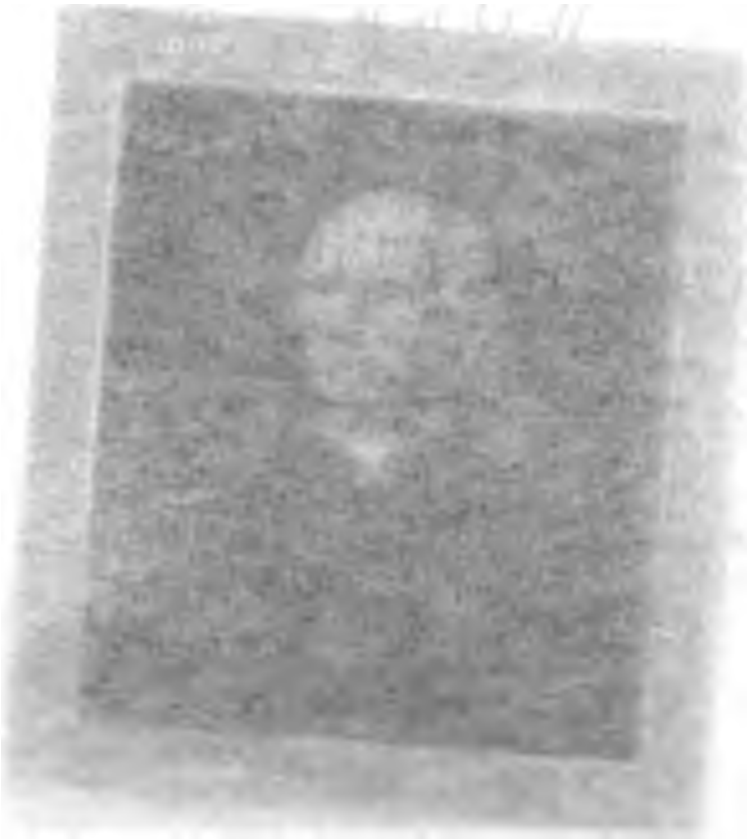
Digitized by Google

Nath. Emmons

Digitized by Google

1861.

Digitized by Google



Digitized by Google

THE

# WORKS

OF

# NATHANAEL EMMONS, D.D.,

THIRD PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN FRANKLIN, MASS.

WITH

## A MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE.

EDITED BY JACOB IDE, D.D.

VOL. I.

BOSTON:
CONGREGATIONAL BOARD OF PUBLICATION,
23 CHAUNCY STREET.
1861.

Digitized by Google

KF 14708

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1861, by the
CONGREGATIONAL BOARD OF PUBLICATION,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

CAMBRIDGE:
ALLEN AND FARNHAM, ELECTROTYPERS AND PRINTERS.

Digitized by Google

# PREFACE TO THE WORKS.

THE edition of Emmons's Works published in 1842 has for some time been exhausted. And numerous calls for them which could not be supplied suggested this new edition, which has been enlarged by the addition of numerous manuscripts not before published. The six volumes now presented would make more than eight volumes of the size of those of the former edition. This enlargement has rendered necessary a new arrangement of the whole.

The Works have been revised and prepared for the press by Rev. Mortimer Blake, of Taunton, whose well-known industry and critical acumen are a sufficient guaranty of the correctness of the copy. To him also are the public indebted for the new indexes which accompany this edition. There is a general index of the topics, one of the texts expounded, and one of the author's definitions of theological terms. This last will be found of great importance to those who would understand his language as he meant to be understood.

The Memoir of Emmons in this edition is by E. A. Park, D. D., who has embodied the Autobiography and other notices of him in the former edition, and with great labor and care has collected other facts respecting his parentage, family, early impressions, ecclesiastical relations, preaching, pastoral life, students, and the influence he exerted upon the ministry and the church in his day. The whole now appears in a consecutive narrative,



Digitized by Google

arranged and expressed with the skill and good taste for which the writer is distinguished.

In selecting the matter for the present edition, the editor has preferred some that was in manuscript to a part that appeared in the first edition, and has substituted the one in the place of the other. It is proper also to say, that several sermons selected for the first volume are necessarily omitted because of the unexpected length of the Memoir.

It is impossible, in publishing a work consisting almost entirely of sermons, preached to the same people, for more than half a century, to arrange the subjects in a strictly systematic order without any repetition of thought or language. To suppose this possible, would be to suppose that the author was very unfaithful in his efforts to meet the wants of his hearers, as the circumstances of individuals must often require a repetition of the same truth that was taught to others, years before. Equally plain is it, that there must be a necessity of repeating the same truth in different connections, in different circumstances, and in its relations to a great variety of other truths. Nor will it be denied, that his readers may be benefited by the contemplation of the same truth in all these different circumstances, times, and relations.

It will be seen by all who attentively peruse these volumes, that the author preached no doctrine that was not, at least in his view, intimately connected with Christian practice. And they will be surprised to see how obviously connected is all Christian practice with Christian doctrine. One object in the selection of so many sermons on the same doctrine, is to show how numerous are the duties which result from these doctrines, as well as the intimate relation in which one doctrine of the gospel stands to another.

JACOB IDE.

MEDWAY, March 18, 1861.



Digitized by Google

# MEMOIR

OF

# NATHANAEL EMMONS;

WITH

## SKETCHES OF HIS FRIENDS AND PUPILS.

BY

EDWARDS A. PARK.



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

# PREFACE.

As Dr. Emmons was an active pastor, fifty-four years; a preacher, fifty-eight years; a minister of the Gospel, seventy-one years; as he lived through more than half of the eighteenth, and through nearly half of the nineteenth century; as some of his publications have now been seventy-eight years before the world, — he must have come in contact with a large variety of minds; and it is impossible to present a full view of his life, without presenting side views of the times through which his influence has been drawn out. This influence has been not only extensive, but also, to a remarkable degree, indirect; therefore his Memoir, if complete, must include the Sketches of those Friends and Pupils through whom he has exerted his power over the community. Some of his former associates are still among the living; and, of course, the notice of them in this Memoir is either brief, or else is omitted altogether. The outward incidents of his life were few, so that his Biography must be the memorial of his thoughts. Many of these thoughts are expressed in his Aphorisms, to which a considerable space is devoted in the Memoir.

In preparing this Biography, the author has been indebted to the Rev. Thomas Williams, whose "Discourse on the Official Character of Nathanael Emmons," was the result of faithful and prolonged study; to the Rev. Dr. Jacob Ide, from



Digitized by Google

whose original Memoir the present volume contains many direct quotations, and also many extracts modified and abridged with his consent; to the Rev. William Clark, Secretary of the New Hampshire Missionary Society, who has been intimately acquainted with the Pupils of Emmons, and with the fruit of their toils; to the "History of the Mendon Association," by Rev. Mortimer Blake; to the manuscript letters and the Published Writings of Rev. Dr. Field, of Stockbridge, Mass.; to Dr. Sprague's Annals of the American Pulpit; to the valuable collection of pamphlets in the Library of Brown University, the gift of Judge Theron Metcalf; to the Library of the American Genealogical Society, and to the private communications of Rev. Dr. Israel Putnam, Mr. D. Williams Patterson, and a large number of clergymen and laymen who deserve and receive the hearty thanks of the Author.

It may be necessary to remind the reader, that when this Memoir was first written, only two volumes of the *new* edition of Emmons's Discourses had been published; and, therefore, the Memoir often refers to the *original* edition of his Works. Where the reference is to *that* edition, it is noted by the words "*Original Edition*," or the syllables "*Orig. Ed.*"; and where the reference is to the *present*, *new* edition, it is noted by the simple term, "*Works*."

EDWARDS A. PARK.

ANDOVER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, March 4, 1861.



Digitized by Google

# SYNOPSIS OF THE MEMOIR.

CHAPTER I. — BIRTH-PLACE, CHURCH RELATIONS, AND FAMILY OF EMMONS, pp. 1–24.

§ 1. *Position and Divisions of his Native Town*, 1–2.

§ 2. *Natural Scenery, and Traditions of East Haddam; their Influence over Emmons*, 2–6.

Brainard's Poems, 3-4. The Machit Moodus, 4–6.

§ 3. *The Importance of Haddam. The Influences which have been exerted upon it, particularly the Influence of the Brainerds; their Influence on the Emmons Family*, 6–12.

Nassau Hall, 7. Memoir of David Brainerd, 8–12.

§ 4. *The Pastors of the Emmons Family*, 12–15.

Rev. Timothy Symmes, 12–13. Rev. Hobart Estabrook, 13–14. Rev. Diodate Johnson, 14–15.

§ 5. *The Church of the Emmons Family; the Church Confession*, 15–17.

§ 6. *The Ancestors and Relatives of Emmons; their Pursuits in Life and Influence upon him*, 17–24.

He drew his illustrations from the Farm, 21–23, and from Natural Scenery, 5. His Attachment to the Scenes of his Childhood, 21–24.

CHAPTER II. — THE INTERVAL BETWEEN HIS LEAVING THE FARM AND ENTERING THE PASTORATE, 25–44.

§ 1. *Preparation and Examination for College; his Life at College*, 25–31.

His first Perusal of Edwards on the Will, 27. Governor Treadwell, Judge Trumbull, Dr. Wales, 26–27. College Friends, 26–30. His College Studies, 29–31.

§ 2. *Professional Education*, 32–34.

Rev. Nathan Strong, 32. Dr. John Smalley, 32–34. Emmons's opposition to Calvinism, conversion to it, reception of the New Divinity, 32–34.



Digitized by Google

§ 3. *Commencement of his Religious Life*, 34–38.
Connection of his new Theological Views with his Religious Experience, 35–38. His Missionary Experience, 37.

§ 4. *Approbation to Preach the Gospel*, 38–43.
His Examination in Theology, 38–42. Protest against it, 38–42.

§ 5. *Mr. Emmons as a Candidate*, 43–44.
His Modest Anticipations, and his Discouragements, 43–44.

CHAPTER III.—THE TOWNSHIP OF FRANKLIN, AND ITS RECEPTION OF THE NEW PASTOR, 45–56.

§ 1. *Its Religious History and Character*, 45–52.
Dedham, 45–46. Wrentham, 46. The Church Covenant, 47. The Ruling Elders, 48–49. The Religious Character of the Town, 47–50. The Clerical Predecessors of Emmons, 49–52.

§ 2. *Emmons's Entrance upon his Pastorate*, 52–56.
His Ordination, 54–56. The first written, and the first printed Communications from his Pen, 54. His method of quieting a troubled Parish, 55–56. His early Doctrinal Preaching, 55–56.

CHAPTER IV.—THE STUDIES AND THE BOOKS OF EMMONS, 57–83.

§ 1. *Little Care for his Secular Concerns*, 57–60.
Illustrations of his Decision, 58–60.

§ 2. *His Taste and Talent for Business*, 61–62.
His Physical Agility, 62.

§ 3. *His Pecuniary Necessities*, 63–64.

§ 4. *Extent of his Reading*, 64–67.
His Commencement of Hebrew Study, 65, 71. The Length of his Student Life, 66.

§ 5. *The Character of his Familiar Books*, 67–71.
The Library presented by Dr. Franklin, 68. The Parish Library, 68–69. The Books to which he most frequently referred, 69–70.

§ 6. *Mode of prosecuting his Studies*, 71–83.

*a. His own Statement of his Method*, 71–78.
He meant to be liberal in his Studies, 72–73. His use of Novels, of Shakspeare, 74. His Thoughtfulness in Reading, 75–76, 65–66. His Thoroughness, 75–76. His Mastery of Difficult Subjects, 76–77.

*b. Questions from his Common-Place Book*, 78–81.

Digitized by Google

c. *His Apothegms on the Method of Study*, 81–82; *also*, 66, 67, 76, 77, 104, 203–204.

CHAPTER V. — HIS FIRST MARRIAGE AND FAMILY, 84–92.

§ 1. *Character of his First Wife*, 84–85.

§ 2. *Early Death of his Wife and Children*, 85–88.

§ 3. *The Effect of his Early Bereavements upon him*, 88–90.

§ 4. *His Aphorisms on Affliction*, 90–92.

CHAPTER VI. — HIS SECOND MARRIAGE AND FAMILY; HIS HOME LIFE, 93–114.

§ 1. *Character of his Second Wife*, 93–97.

§ 2. *His Conversation with Children*, 97–100.

§ 3. *Letters to his Grand-daughters*, 101–104.

§ 4. *His Regular Habits at Home*, 104–107.
Remark of President Lord, 105. Diversions, 106–107.

§ 5. *His Precision at Home*, 107–109.
Illustrations, 108; also, 106.

§ 6. *His Temperance*, 109–111.

§ 7. *His Use of Tobacco*, 111–112.

§ 8. *Seeming Tameness of his Life*, 112–114.
Relieved by his Theories of Angelic and Divine Agency, 112–114.

CHAPTER VII. — HIS PERSONAL FRIENDS, ASSOCIATES, AND CORRESPONDENTS, 115–127.

§ 1. *His Earlier Friends*, 115–116.
Letter on Friendship, 115. Intimacy with Edwardean Divines, 115–116.

§ 2. *His Later Friends*, 116–121.
Dr. Samuel Spring, 117–118. Rev. David Sanford, 118–120. Rev. Samuel Niles, 120–121.

§ 3. *Correspondence with Dr. Emmons*, 121–125.
Letters of Governor Treadwell, 122–123; of Dr. Price, 124; of Dr. Emmons, 123–125.

§ 4. *Visit of Dr. Archibald Alexander to Dr. Emmons*, 125–127

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII. — His Interest in National Politics, 128–143.

§ 1. *His Troubles during the Revolutionary War*, 127–132.
His Revolutionary Politics, 128–129. Pecuniary Sufferings of Clergymen during the War, 130–132. His Attachment to his Parish, 131–132.

§ 2. *His Political Discourses and Action; his Rules for them*, 132–138.
Federalism of the Clergy, 133–134. The Religiousness of his Politics, 134–135. His Regard for Principles rather than Men, 135–136. Subordination of Politics to Religion, 135–137. His use of Fast and Thanksgiving Days, 135–136.

§ 3. *His Jeroboam Sermon*, 138–143.
Allusions to President Jefferson, 140–142. Dread of Jacobinism, 142–143.

§ 4. *His Influence on Political Topics*, 143.

CHAPTER IX. — His Interest in Ecclesiastical Polity, 143–152.

§ 1. *Imagined Inconsistency between his Views of Civil and Ecclesiastical Government*, 144.

§ 2. *Radical Distinction between the Ecclesiastical and the Political Commonwealth*, 144–145.
The Spirituality of the Church, 145. Its Power, Executive only, 145.

§ 3. *The Dignity of a Church and its Members*, 146–147.
The Dignity of the Human Soul, 146.

§ 4. *Dignity of the President of a Church*, 147–150.
The Pastor a Chief Justice, 147. Appointed by God, 147–148. Permanency of the Pastoral Relation, 147–148. Regard for Ministerial Character, 148–149. Councils, 149–150.

§ 5. *The Church is a School*, 150.

§ 6. *Emmons illustrated his own Type of Congregationalism*, 150–152.
He was a true Bishop, 151. His Bishopric depended on his Worth, 151–152.

§ 7. *The "Jealousy" of Emmons and Spring*, 152.

CHAPTER X. — His Interest in the Polity of the Churches, 153–175.

§ 1. *His Anticipatory Spirit*, 153–154.
His Concession to Established Usages, 153. His Conservatism, 153–154.

Digitized by Google

§ 2. *His Apprehensions of Evil from Sabbath Schools*, 154–155.
Attachment to Home Influences, 154–155. Fears respecting Sabbath School Literature, 154–155.

§ 3. *His Apprehensions of Evil from the National Tract Society*, 156.
Doubts with regard to the Union of Calvinists and Arminians, 156.

§ 4. *His Apprehensions of Evil from all National Religious Societies*, 156–161.
Opposition to Fashions, 157. Individuality of Influence, 157–158. Fears of Arbitrary Power, 158–160. Duty of Calvinists, 159–160. His Agency in establishing Charitable Societies, 161–162.

§ 5. *His Distinction between the National and the State Societies*, 161–162.

§ 6. *His Apprehensions of Evil from the General Associations of Ministers in a State*, 162–166.
Congregationalism or Romanism the only Self-consistent Scheme, 163–164. His Opposition to the Presbyterianizing Congregationalists of his day, 164–166.

§ 7. *His Apprehensions of Evil from the "Plan of Union,"* 166–167.
The Union all on one side, 167. Love of Independence, 167–168. The Subjection of Congregationalists to Presbyterians, 163–172.

§ 8. *His Letter to Dr. Lyman*, 168–172.

§ 9. *His Apprehensions of Evil from Protracted Meetings*, 172–175.
His Friendliness to Revivals of Religion, 173–174. Suspicions of his Opposition to them, 173–174. The Approximations of Men to his own Opinions, 174–175; also 155, 158, 165–167.

CHAPTER XI. — HIS CONNECTION WITH THE CAUSE OF MISSIONS, 176–200.

§ 1. *His Early Interest in Missions*, 176–181.
Letter of Dr. Burton, 176–177. Missionary Theology, 177–178. Sermon in 1800 on Missions, 178–179. Formation of the Massachusetts Missionary Society, 179–181.

§ 2. *Connection of his Efforts with the Formation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions*, 181–183.
Connection between the Massachusetts Missionary Society and the American Board C. F. M., 182–183.

§ 3. *The Influence of Hopkinsianism on the Early Friends of the American Board*, 183–190.
Origin of the American Board, 183–185. Dr. Samuel Spring, 184–185. Dr. Samuel Worcester, 185–187. Dr. Adoniram Judson, 188. Rev. Samuel J. Mills, Jr., 188. Rev. Gordon Hall, 188–189. Dr. Cyrus Kingsbury, 189–190. Rev. Daniel Temple, 190. Mr. Norris of Salem, 190.

Digitized by Google

§ 4. *The Special Interest of Emmons in Home Missions*, 190–192.

His Plan of Missionary Operations, 190–192. Example of David Brainerd, 190, 8–12.

§ 5. *Influence of his Writings in Evangelizing our New Settlements*, 192–200.

Letters of Gratitude addressed to him, 193. Rev. Hezekiah Balch, 194–196. Remarkable Will, 195. Dr. Charles Coffin, 196. Dr. Robert Henderson, 197. Dr. Gideon Blackburn, 197. Dr. Isaac Anderson, 197–199. James Gallaher, 199. Dr. David Nelson, 199. Hopkinsians among the Negroes in Tennessee, 200. Influence of Hopkinsians in Tennessee, 199–200.

CHAPTER XII. — HIS INTEREST IN THE CAUSE OF EDUCATION, 201–214.

§ 1. *An Example of Individual and Indirect Influence in Educating Men*, 201–204.

Letter of Dr. Joel Hawes, 201–202. Dr. Gardiner Spring, 202–203. The Hook upon Emmons's Study Door, 203.

§ 2. *The Kindliness of his Severity in Criticism*, 204–206.

Illustrations of it, 205–206. Confidence of his Friends in his Kindness, 204–206.

§ 3. *His Interest in Seminaries of Learning*, 206–214.

His Indirect Influence, 206, also 201.

*a. His Interest in Andover Theological Seminary*, 207–210.

Efforts for the Establishment of a Theological Seminary, 207. Opposition to the Andover Compromise, 208. Ultimate Agreement between Dr. Emmons and Dr. Eliphalet Pearson, 209–210.

*b. His Interest in Bangor and Auburn Theological Seminaries, and in Yale, Williams, Dartmouth, and Amherst Colleges*, 210–214.

The Professors at Bangor, 210. Professors at Auburn, 211. The Yale Theologians, 212. The Early Hopkinsianism of Williams College, 212–213.

CHAPTER XIII. — HIS THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL, 215–265.

§ 1. *Number of his Pupils*, 215–216.

His Influence as a Theological Teacher, 215–216. Advantages and Disadvantages of a private Course of Theological Study, 215–216.

§ 2. *His Method of Giving Instruction*, 216–221.

His Modest Entrance upon his Career as a Teacher, 216–217. Letter to Rev. Asahel Hooker, 218–220. Comparison of his Course of Study with that of Dr. Tappan of Cambridge, 219. Letter of Dr. Pond, 220–221. Rev. Thomas Williams and Rev. Joseph Emerson, 220–221.

Digitized by Google

§ 3. *The Interest of his Pupils in the Cause of Education*, 221–238.

Professor Abijah Wines, 222–224. Professor Bancroft Fowler, 224. Professor John Smith, 224. Professor Enoch Pond, 224–225. Rev. Kiah Bailey, 225–228. President Stephen Chapin, 228–229. Dr. William Jackson, 229–232. Rev. J. B. Preston, 232. Professor Nathaniel Kendrick, 232–233. Rev. Joseph Emerson, 233–234. Professor Alexander Metcalf Fisher, 234–236. Dr. John Crane, 236. Professor Calvin Park, 237. Dr. Ebenezer Burgess, 237. Rufus Graves and Samuel Fowler Dickinson, 237–238.

§ 4. *The Interest of his Pupils in the Work of Missions*, 238–243.

Rev. Herman Daggett, 238–239. Rev. Thaddeus Osgood, 239–242. Rev. Joseph Rowell, 242–243. Rev. Jacob Cram, 243.

§ 5. *His Pupils viewed as Pioneers in establishing Christian and Charitable Institutions*, 243–252.

Dr. Walter Harris, 244–247. Rev. Reid Page, 248–249. Rev. Jonathan Ward, 249–251. Rev. Nathan Church, Rev. James Tufts, Rev. Pierson Thurston, 251–252. Rev. William Riddel, Rev. Drury Fairbanks, 252.

§ 6. *The Interest of his Pupils in Revivals of Religion*, 252–254.

Rev. Eli Smith, 252–253; Rev. Benjamin Wood, Rev. Elnathan Walker, Rev. Artemas Dean, 253–254.

§ 7. *The Solid Pastors among the Franklin Pupils*, 254–256.

Rev. Holloway Fish, 254. Rev. Nathaniel Hall, Rev. Samuel Judson, Rev. Nathan Holman, Rev. John Fitch, Rev. David Jewett, Rev. Edward Whipple, 255. Rev. Emerson Paine, Rev. Willard Holbrook, 256.

§ 8. *The Variety of Gifts and Fortunes among the Franklin Pupils*, 256–258.

Rev. Nathaniel Howe, 256. Rev. Calvin Chadduck, Rev. Levi Nelson, Rev. Roswell Randall Swan, 257. Rev. Nathaniel Rawson, Rev. Bela Kellogg, Rev. Jonathan Longley, Rev. Moses Partridge, Hon. Christopher Webb, 258.

§ 9. *Men of Mark among the Franklin Pupils*, 258–260.

Rev. Thomas Williams, 259–260. Hon. Thomas W. Thompson, 260–261. Letter of Dr. Elijah Parish to Parker Cleaveland, LL. D., 259.

§ 10. *The Age of the Franklin Pupils*, 262–263.

§ 11. *The Prolonged Influence of Emmons through his Pupils*, 263–265.

CHAPTER XIV. — THE PUBLICATIONS OF EMMONS, 266–271.

Early Notices of him as a Pastor and Author, 266–268. President Stiles's Allusion to him, 267. List of his Works, 268–271.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XV. — THE LIFE WORK OF EMMONS, 272–360.

§ 1. *Dr. Emmons as a Preacher*, 273–331.

A. — *His own Description of his Homiletic Plan*, 273–279.

Preaching, his Principal Object, 273. He began to write his Sermons late in the week, 273–274. Systematic Preaching, 274. Argumentative Preaching, 274–275. Occasional and Textual Sermons, 274–275. His Principles in arranging a Discourse, 275–276. The Application of his Sermons, 276. Explanatory Sermons, 276. The unexpected Development of his Sermons, 277–278. His Prudential Considerations, 278–279.

B. — *General and Critical Remarks on Emmons as a Preacher and Writer*, 279–331.

Remarks of Dr. Gardiner Spring, 279.

1. — *He spent but little time on a Single Discourse*, 279–283.

Neatness of his Manuscripts, 280–281. His low Estimate of their Value, 280–281. Number of his Sermons, 283.

2. — *His Sermons are not Printed as they were Delivered*, 283–284.

Difficulty of Estimating them as they were originally Delivered, 283–284. He was an Extemporaneous Preacher, 283.

3. — *The Influence of his Sermons depended somewhat on the Occasion and Manner of their Delivery*, 284–287.

Their Pertinence, 284–286. His Elocution, 285–287.

4. — *He was a Representative of Intellectual Preachers*, 288–291.

His Dependence on Truth rather than on Church Authority, 288–289. The Logical Element in Sermons, 289–290. Popular Interest in Argumentative Discourses, 289–290.

5. — *Was he Plain and Simple in his Discourses?* 291–307.

a. — HE AIMED TO BE PERSPICUOUS, 292–294.

His Sermon on 1 Cor. 4 : 2.

b. — HE ARRANGED HIS IDEAS IN A LUMINOUS ORDER, 294.

c. — HE REPEATED HIS IDEAS, 294–295.

d. — HE SPOKE AS HE THOUGHT, 296–297.

His Naturalness of Style, 296.

e. — HE EXPLAINED HIS THEME, 297–298.

He explained Things rather than Words, 297, 363.

Digitized by Google

f.—He was not, in all senses and in all relations of the term, a plain preacher, 298–307.

Different Meanings of the word Plain, 298–299. Boldness and Intensity of Emmons's Style, 288–299. The Variety of his Talents, 299. His Remarks on the Mysteries of the Bible, 299–300; on Certainty and Necessity, 300–301. His Frankness in Preaching the most unpopular Doctrines, 301–302. The Proportions of his Theological System, 302–303. His Remarks on the Essential Doctrines of Religion, 303–305. His Distinction between the Fundamental and the less Essential Doctrines of the Gospel, 305–307. Was he a Catholic Divine? 303–307. Did he regard the Atonement as the Central or Fundamental Doctrine of the Gospel? 307.

6.—*He was a Pointed Preacher*, 308–309.

He aimed to make his Discourses appropriate to the wants of his Hearers, 308–309. Familiarity of his Allusions, 308–309. His intensely Practical Aim, 308–309. Sermon against Fortune-Telling, 309.

7.—*He Developed the Harmony of Doctrine*, 309–311.

Alleged Contradictions in his Sermons, 310. Power of retaining the Interest of his Hearers, 309–310. His Popularity at Home, 310–311.

8.—*His Originality and Ingenuity*, 311–312.

9.—*His Childlike Statements*, 312–313.

He aimed to interest Children, 312. Here and hence he is misunderstood, 312–313, also 345.

10.—*The Pertinence of his Discourses*, 313–315.

They must be *studied* in order to be understood, 313. The Appropriateness of their Style, 314–315.

11.—*Was he Concise or Diffuse, Exact or Indefinite in his Style?* 315–317.

The Different Opinions on this Question, 315–316.

12.—*Was he a Neat Writer?* 317–318.

Apothegms illustrating his Neatness of Style, 317–318.

13.—*The Dramatic Element in Emmons*, 318–319.

The Dialogue in his Sermons, 318–319.

14.—*He was a Biblical Preacher*, 319–321.

The multitude of his Biblical Quotations, 320–321. His Style formed on King James's Version, 320. His *Accommodations* of the Inspired Words, 321.

15.—*Apothegms illustrating his Didactic Method*, 321–324.



Digitized by Google

16. — *His Startling Apothegms*, 324–327.

17. — *His Homiletic Apothegms*, 327–329.

18. — *Effect of his Discourses*, 329–331.
Illustrations of it, 329–331. Prof. J. L. Kingsley, 330.

§ 2. *Emmons as a Pastor*, 331.

A. — *His Devotion to his Flock*, 331.
His Sermons are *Franklin* Sermons, 331.

B. — *His Originality in his Pastorate*, 331–333.
His Pastoral Visits, 331–333. Visits to the Pastor, 332.

C. — *His Familiar Acquaintance with his Parishioners*, 333–334.
His Knowledge of Character, 333. He was a *Watchman*, 334. His Knowledge of the Business, and the Amusements of his People, 333–334.

D. — *He combined a Stern Fidelity with a Tender Love to his People*, 334–335.
Letter of Hon. Tristram Burgess, 335.

E. — *His Pastorate was a Solemn one*, 335–336.

F. — *His Pastorate was an Authoritative one*, 336–337.
His Respect for the old Parish Lines, 336–337. The United Feeling of his Parish, 337.

G. — *The Pastor's Wit*, 337, 338.
He used it for the Good of his People, 337. Intercourse with a Pantheist, 338.

H. — *The Pastor's Dignity*, 338–339.
His Personal Appearance, 338–339. His Pecuniary Affairs, 339.

I. — *His Promptness and Punctuality*, 340.
His adherence to a Plan, 340.

§ 3. *Emmons's Brief Statement of his Labors in his Parish*, 340–344.

A. — "*I Catechized the Children*," 341.
The Interest of Children in him, 341.

B. — "*I Preached a Concert Lecture*," 341–342.
His Early Interest in Missions, 341. The Popularity of his Quarterly Lecture, and other Occasional Services, 342.

C. — "*I uniformly carried on the Work of the Ministry.*" — "*I statedly Preached on the Sabbath.*" — "*I constantly and punctually attended all my Official Duties*," 342–343.
His Mode of conducting the Services of the Sanctuary, 342–343.

D. — *Objections to his Method of conducting his Ministry*, 343–344.
The Brevity of his Prayers, 343. The Infrequency of his Public Services, 344.

Digitized by Google

§ 4. *His Intellectual Influence over his Parish*, 344–350.

A. — *His Methods of Quickening the Intelleet of men who were associated with him*, 345–348.

His Church was a School, 345; also, 150. Prominence given to Religious Doctrine, 345. He insisted on the Attention of his Parish to his Sermons, 346–347. Methods of securing Attention, 346–348. The Simplicity of his Aims, 346.

B. — *The Intellectual Results of his Pastorate*, 348–350.

Hon. Jabez Fisher, 348–349. Professional Men trained under his Pastorate, 349–350. The Acumen of his Parishioners, 349.

§ 5. *The Religious Influence of Emmons over his Parish*, 350–356.

A. — *His own Statement concerning the Spiritual Results of his Labors*, 350–351.

His great Aim was to enrich the Hearts of his People, 350.

B. — *Appendix to this Statement*, 352–354.

The Revivals in his Parish, 350–354. The Religious Character of his Parishioners, 350–354. Their Testimony in regard to him, 353. Strictness in Examining Members for Admission into his Church, 354.

C. — *His Lengthened Rural Pastorate is a Lesson of Contentment to Country Ministers*, 354–356.

The Influence of a Retired Minister upon the world, 354. The Influence of his Pastoral Life upon his Theological Speculations, 355. A New England Church-Member of the Olden Time, 355–356.

§ 6. *Illustrations of his Ministerial Piety*, 356–359.

His Anniversary Discourses, 357–358. His Lowly Estimate of Himself, 357–359. His Attachment to Old Usages, 358–359.

§ 7. *Apothegms illustrating his Ministerial Wisdom*, 359–360.

CHAPTER XVI. — HIS THEOLOGICAL SYSTEM, 361–430.

The Antiquity of his Influence, 361.

§ 1. *The Historical Aspects of his Theological System*, 362–363.

A. — *His early Services in the Infidel Controversy*, 362–363.

His Familiarity with the Writings of Infidels, 362. His strict Theory of Inspiration, 363. His Estimate of the Internal Evidence for the Bible, 362. His Explanatory Preaching, 363.

B. — *His early Services in the Arminian Controversy*, 363–366.

He labored with regard to Principles rather than Men, 364. Not a one-sided Partisan, 364–365. His theories of Free Will and of the Nature of Sin, were designed to subvert Arminianism, 365–366. He has suggested the only feasible Method of defending Calvinism, 366.

Digitized by Google

C. — *His early Services in the Antinomian Controversy*, 366–367.
He was not a man of One Idea, 366. His theory of Natural Ability, 366. His theory of the Order of the Virtues, 366–367.

D. — *His early Services in the Unitarian Controversy*, 367–371.
He contended against Wrong Principles, rather than against Men, 367. His Sermon preached seventy-two years ago, 368. His Convention Sermon, 369. His type of Congregationalism, 370. His relations to the Exclusive System, 368–371. Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, 371.

E. — *His early Services in the Controversy with the Universalists*, 371–372.
The Ingenuity and Profoundness of his Arguments against Universalism, 372; also 311–312.

F. — *His early Services in the Utilitarian Controversy*, 373–374.
He was a man of Intuitions, 373. His Independence, 373.

G. — *His early Services in behalf of the Theology of Religious Revivals*, 374–380.
Letter to a Friend, 374. Influence of Brainerd upon him, 374; also 373.

(1) *He taught that God never requires of Men, what they have not the Natural Power to do*, 374–375.

(2) *He taught that Sinners not only* can *but* should, — *and, when exhorted* at all, *should be exhorted* uniformly, *to make for themselves the new heart*, 376–379.

a. — ALL MORAL AGENCY CONSISTS IN CHOOSING, 376.

b. — HOLINESS DOES NOT CONSIST IN A GOOD NATURE, PRINCIPLE, TASTE, OR RELISH, ANTECEDENT TO CHOICE; AND SIN DOES NOT CONSIST IN AN EVIL NATURE, PRINCIPLE, TASTE, OR RELISH, ANTECEDENT TO CHOICE, 377–379.
Controversy between his classmate, Gov. Treadwell, and his teacher, Dr. Smalley, 377–388. Dr. Asa Burton, 378.

(3) *He taught that the Natural Tendency of Truth is to restrain Men from Sin*, 379–380.
Distinction between Natural Tendency and Moral Tendency, 379–380. The animating spirit of his Theology, 380.

H. — *His early Services in behalf of a Philanthropic Theology*, 381–382.
He did not adopt a "cast-iron" Theology, 382. His theory of Love to Men, 381–382.

§ 2. *The Formative Principles of his Theology*, 382–411.

A. — *He aimed to make his Theology illustrate the Loveliness of God*, 382–383.
He would never tolerate a Doctrine which he deemed Inhuman, 382.

Digitized by Google

(1) *He believed that it is not only possible, but it is also easy, to do all that God commands*, 383.
Difference between Dr. Emmons and Dr. N. W. Taylor, 383.

(2) *He believed that all the Acts of Jehovah are prompted by a supreme Regard to the Law of Rectitude*, 383–384.
His Thought on the Day of Judgment, 383.

(3) *He believed that all, even the severest Acts of Jehovah, are prompted by Infinite Love*, 384.

B.—*Emmons aimed to make his Theology illustrate the Supremacy of God*, 385.
The fashionable Complaint against Anthropology and Ethics, 385. His Theology is Objective rather than Subjective, 386. He insists on the Fairness and Equitableness of God, in order to insist on the Divine Supremacy, 385.

(1) *Emmons did believe in the Reality of Second Causes; in the Laws as real Forces of Nature*, 385–386.

(2) *He chose to say but little of the Natural Forces, lest he should withdraw Attention from the Supreme Dominion of Jehovah*, 386–387.
His use of the word *Efficient*, 387. Causation in God, like Causation in Man, 387.

C.—*He aimed to make his Theology illustrate the Sovereignty of Divine Grace*, 387–392.

(1) *He regarded the Atonement of Christ as the Central Truth of Theology*, 387–388; also 307.

(2) *He regarded the Atonement as concentrating in its Nature, Origin, and Application, the Free and Sovereign Grace of God*, 388–392.
Reasons for his Theory of the Atonement, 389. His Theory misunderstood, 389–392. A *Distinction* mistaken for a *Denial*, 390–392.

D.—*He aimed to make his Theological System illustrate the Duty of Union with God*, 392–393.
His Genius is manifested in reducing an entire Science to a few First Principles, 392.

E.—*He aimed to make his Theology illustrate the Duty of Men to love themselves*, 393–394.
The importance which he attached to this Principle, 393.

F.—*He aimed to make his Creed illustrate the Harmony of Disinterested Submission with Love to Self, Love to Men, Love to God*, 394–403.
Madame Guion, 395. John Calvin, 396. Professor Stuart, 396–401. Emmons misunderstood, 401. The practical relations of his Theory, 402–403. Manner of speaking of himself, 402–403.

Digitized by Google

G. — *He aimed to make his Creed Illustrate the Fitness of Humility and Penitence*, 403–404.

His Relations to Professors Woods and Taylor, on the Doctrine of Sin, 403.

H. — *He aimed to make his Theology both Stimulating and Comprehensive*, 404–407.

His Genius is seen in his combining these two Qualities, 404. His regard to Consistency, 405.

I. — *He aimed to make his Theology Biblical*, 407–411.

His Stern words, 407. His Principle, that the Language of the Bible should be the Language of Scientific Theology, 408–409; also 364. Biblical Figures, 408. Divine Actions, 408. His disagreement with Professor Stuart, 409. His Unfaltering Spirit, 409. Paraphrase of his Pharaoh Sermon, 409–411.

§ 3. *The Creed of Emmons is generally Misapprehended*, 411–430.

Sources of this Misapprehension, 411.

A. — *He has been supposed to teach that the Soul is a mere Series of Exercises*, 411–417.

Drs. Dwight, Woods, Richards, Anderson, 411–413. His aim to represent the Soul as *Spiritual*, 412. Proof that he believed in a Spiritual Substratum, 412–417. Letter of Dr. Ide, 413–417.

B. — *He has been supposed to teach not only the Fact, that God does secure the Fulfilment of his Decrees; but also the Mode in which He secures their Fulfilment*, 417–419.

He looked further than his Critics look, 417. He did not consider the *Mode*, 417–419. Letter of Dr. Ide, 418–419. The Strictness of his Calvinism is seen in his making the *Providence*, coextensive with the *Decrees*, of God, 417–419.

C. — *He has been supposed to teach that the Soul has no Constitutional Tendencies which, being themselves devoid of moral Character, are yet the Occasion of moral Character*, 420–421.

Drs. Fitch, Taylor, and Goodrich, 420. Quotations from Emmons, 420.

D. — *He has been supposed to undervalue the Kindly Spirit of Theological Science*, 421–422.

His Genial Expressions, 421; also 381–384, 393, etc.

E. — *His Calvinism has been regarded as too High, and likewise as too Low*, 422–430.

*a.* — *His Critics overlook the Fact, that he aimed to teach a Positive Calvinism*, 422.

The Decision and Positiveness of his Character, 422.

Digitized by Google

*b.* — *His Critics overlook the Fact, that he aimed to make the Essence of Calvinism prominent and conspicuous*, 423–426.

The Essence of Calvinism consists in exalting the Sovereign Government of God, 423. Emmons's View of God's Agency in the occurrence of Sin, 423–425. Letter of Dr. Ide, 423–425. Emmons and the Westminster Assembly, 425. The Essence of Calvinism consists in Doctrines that awaken Remorse and Self-abhorrence, 425–426. Generic and Personal Sin, 426.

*c.* — *His Critics overlook the Fact, that he aimed to exhibit a Consistent Calvinism*, 426–427.

The Semi-Calvinists of his day, 426–427.

*d.* — *His Critics overlook the Fact, that he was an Independent Calvinist*, 427–430.

He was not a Calvinist by Nature, 427. The value of his Independent Testimony in favor of Calvinism, 427. Dr. Ware, of Cambridge, 427. Miss Hannah Adams's History of all Religions, 428. Emmons's Summary of his own Views, 428–430. The old Calvinism susceptible of Improvement, 429–430. Wens, 429–430.

CHAPTER XVII. — THE NEW ERA IN HIS LIFE, 431–447.

§ 1. *His Later Afflictions*, 431–438.

Character and death of his daughter Delia, 431–433; of his son Erastus, 433–435. Remarkable Funeral Sermon, 434. Character and death of his daughter Sarah, 435–436. Death of Mrs. Emmons, 436–438.

§ 2. *His Retirement from his Pastorate, and his Relations to his Successors in Office*, 439–443.

Sound Principles with regard to Continuance in Office, 439. Letter of Resignation, 439. Charge to his Successor, 440–441. Treatment of his Successors, 441–443. Dismission of Dr. Smalley, 442. Another Pastor, 442–443. Mr. Southworth's Testimony with regard to Dr. Emmons, 443. Emmons's Idol, 443.

§ 3. *His Third Marriage*, 443–444.

§ 4. *The Renewal of his Public Activity*, 444–447.

A. — *His Services in the Cause of Anti-Masonry*, 444–445.

His Consistency and his Influence, as an Anti-Mason, 444–445.

B. — *His Services in the Cause of Anti-Slavery*, 445–446.

His Self-consistency in the Anti-Slavery Cause, 445. He presides at a Meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society, 446. His visit to New York and to Hallowell, 445–446.

§ 5. *His New Popularity*, 446–447.

His philosophical Endurance of Popular Neglect, 446. Remarks of Judge Theron Metcalf, 447.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XVIII. — SOURCES OF THE GENERAL INTEREST IN DR. EMMONS, 448–460.

Confidence of his Friends in his Character, 448. His Faults, 448. Variety of Excellences, 448–449.

§ 1. *The Cheerful Virtues of Emmons*, 449–450.

His wise Management of his Wit, 449–450. Usefulness of it, 450.

§ 2. *The prolonged Tenacity of his Physical and Mental System*, 450–452.

Vigor in Old Age, 450–452. His last Speech to his Parishioners, 450–451. Simplicity in speaking of himself, 451. His Logic in his Ninety-sixth Year, 452.

§ 3. *The Resemblance between his Outer and his Inner Being*, 452–453.

His Uprightness, 452. His Frankness, 452–453.

§ 4. *His Conversational Apothegms, and his Socratic Method*, 453–454.

The New School and the Old, 454. His Conversation on the Cause of Sin, 454.

§ 5. *The Combination of apparently Discordant Attributes in his Character*, 454–457.

His Authority and Simplicity, 454–455. Prudence and Frankness, 455. Modesty and Self-Respect, 455. His Method of rebuking an Opponent, 456. Candor and Inflexibleness, 456.

§ 6. *His Consistency with himself*, 457.

His Originality of Feeling, as well as of Thought, 457. His Life is a Study, 457.

§ 7. *His Peculiarities of Manner*, 457–459.

His Conversation on Optimism, 458. On the Substratum of the Soul, 458. On Love to Self, 458–459.

§ 8. *He was a Representative of the Ancient Divines of New England*, 459–460; also 108–109.

Physical Regimen, 459. Personal Acquaintance with the New England Fathers, 460. A recent *man* but an ancient *theologian*, 460. His antique use of Terms, 460. His Hebrew, 460.

CHAPTER XIX—THE CLOSING SCENES IN HIS LIFE, 461–468.

His Meditations on Old Age, 461.

§ 1. *His Meditations on Death*, 461–464.

His Familiarity with it, 461–464. His Simple-hearted words, 462–464.

§ 2. *His Decline and Death*, 464–466.

"I am ready," 465. Closing Scene, 466.

§ 3. *The Solemnities that followed his Death*, 466–468.

His Funeral, 466–468. The Funeral Sermon, 467. His Grave-stone, 468. His Monument, 468.

Digitized by Google

# MEMOIR.

THE theological life of New England has a marked individuality. It is now, more than it ever was, attracting the attention of European scholars. There *has* been nothing, there probably *will* be nothing, exactly like it. One of the most unique representatives of this clerical life is Nathanael Emmons. It is impossible to comprehend his character without understanding the agencies under which it was moulded, and the influences which have flowed from it. His predecessors and his followers are a mirror in which we must look at his own benignant face. The life of Emmons, then, is a history of his times; not so much of the outward events that signalized those times, as of the intellectual and moral struggles that underlay those events. It is the record of a *mind.* It is the record of an *inward* power which has worked in solitude, without the aid of combinations and political machinery. It is the record of an *individual* authority, formed by private character. by silent reasonings by modest, humble thought.

## CHAPTER I.

### BIRTH-PLACE, CHURCH RELATIONS, AND FAMILY OF EMMONS.

#### § 1. *Position and Divisions of his Native Town.*

"I was born April 20, 1745, O. S. in the town of East Haddam, county of Hartford, and colony of Connecticut." — *Memoir of Himself.*



Digitized by Google

This first sentence of Emmons's autobiography, unveils one marked feature of his character. Why did he not write that he was born on the first of May, New Style, 1745, and in the county of Middlesex, to which East Haddam has belonged since the year 1785, and in the State, rather than the Colony of Connecticut? He loved the Old Style of things; and chose to talk as his father and mother had talked before him.

He might have added, that East Haddam was once a part of the old township of Haddam (formerly Had-ham), and was legally separated from it in 1734; and that his early home was in that parish of East Haddam which is called Millington, where an ecclesiastical society was formed in 1733, and its first meeting-house built in 1743, two years before he was born. The parish of Millington is about twenty miles from Norwich and New London; eighteen miles from Saybrook; about thirty-five miles from Hartford; and about five miles from the banks of the Connecticut River, which affords to the inhabitants of East Haddam various facilities for navigation.

### § 2. *Natural Scenery and Traditions of East Haddam; their Influence over Emmons.*

Although Dr. Emmons wrote but little concerning the place of his birth, he thought much of it. In his later age he visited and revisited his old home, with a childlike joy that the lines had fallen to him in so pleasant a place. His character was doubtless affected, in some degree, by the natural scenery, and the early traditions of the township in which he was trained. The rockbound hills of his native parish seem well fitted to nurture his habit of digging among the hard twisted themes of theology. For many years his father lived on the very verge of a precipice, near a high and sharp ledge of rocks, at the foot of which flowed a swift brook. The rising grounds covered with the cedar and the oak, the intervening meadows through which wind limpid and rapid streams, the "grate river," which the early records of the town celebrate as enriching its borders, the thrilling legends in regard to the Indian tribes who were attracted to the fishing brooks and hunting forests of the town, were not without their effect upon him, schooled though he was in the stern processes

Digitized by Google

of metaphysics. He knew what was meant by a slight dash of poetic superstition. He *felt* what an artist would have *expressed.* His mind was silently moulded by that which a man of more imaginative tendencies would have celebrated in song.[1]

The appropriate influence of the scenes in this "hill country" of Connecticut has been well developed by the poet Brainard. It was with his eye on the romantic townships of Old Haddam and East Haddam, that he indited his poem on the Connecticut River, "the stream of his sleeping fathers," along whose "noble shores,"

"the tall steeple shines
At mid-day higher than" the "mountain pines."

"Dark as the frost-nipped leaves that strewed the ground,
The Indian hunter here his shelter found;
Here cut his bow and shaped his arrows true,
Here built his wigwam and his bark canoe,
Speared the quick salmon leaping up the fall,
And slew the deer without the rifle ball."[2]

The Salmon River, so called from the fish that once abounded in it, enters into the Connecticut at East Haddam. It was a favorite retreat of the poet Brainard, as its clear waters had been for ages the chosen resort of the angler, and its wooded banks had been the home of the Indian huntsman. Brainard sings of this river:[3]

"There's much in its wild history, that teems
With all that's superstitious, and that seems
To match our fancy and eke out our dreams
In that small brook." . . .

"Here Philip came, and Miantonimo,
And asked about their fortunes long ago,
As Saul to Endor, that her witch might show
Old Samuel." . . .

[1] It is a mistake to suppose that Dr. Emmons was devoid of taste for poetical composition. He read Thomson's Seasons with delight; was particularly fond of Young's Night Thoughts, and was a close, admiring student of Shakespeare. Milton he read slowly. "I never can go through more than five pages without stopping," he said of the Paradise Lost.

[2] Remains, p. 60.

[3] Ibid. pp. 139–141.

Digitized by Google

"Such are the tales they tell. 'Tis hard to rhym
About a little and unnoticed stream,
That few have heard of — but it is a theme
I chance to love;
And one day I may tune my rye-straw reed,
And whistle to the note of many a deed
Done on this river — which, if there be need,
I'll try to prove."

The poem of Brainard on "The Black Fox of Salmon River," and also the poem, entitled "Matchit Moodus," give us fine specimens of the legends, which, in the younger days of Emmons, were familiar to the natives of East Haddam.[1] With regard to the Matchit Moodus, Rev. Dr. Field remarks:

"A large tribe [of Indians] inhabited East Haddam, which they called Machemoodus, or the place of noises, from the noises or earthquakes which had been heard there, and which have continued to the present time. These were of a fierce and wretched character, remarkable for *pawaws* and the worship of evil spirits. The noises from the earth regarded as the voice of their god, confirmed them in their monstrous notions of religion. An old Indian, being asked the reason of the noises, said, 'the Indian's god was very angry because the Englishmen's God came here.'[2]

"Those noises in East Haddam which caught the attention of the natives, were not disregarded by the first settlers and their associates, nor have they been disregarded by later generations. Seventy or eighty years ago, in consequence of their greater frequency and violence, they gained the attention of the neighboring towns, and became the subject of inquiry and discussion among the learned and inquisitive throughout the State. They have often been perceived in a small circle, producing a slight motion in the earth and in the river, and have been called Moodus' noises, but when they extended thirty or forty miles they have been denominated earthquakes. The earthquakes felt in Connecticut for more than forty years, have been observed to be more violent in East Haddam than in any other place. The most violent of all was on the 18th of May, 1791, which so agitated the earth as to untop many chimneys, and excite consternation in every family. There were many shocks, some of which were noticed at New York, Boston, and Northampton. The next day apertures and fissures were found in the northeast part of East Had-

[1] Brainard's Literary Remains, pp. 141 and 47.

[2] A History of the Towns of Haddam and East Haddam. By David D. Field, A. M., Pastor of the Church in Haddam. Printed in Middletown, 1814, p. 4.

Digitized by Google

dam, first society, which ascertained the spot where the explosion took place. Since that time the noises have been less frequent and violent."[1]

Many have supposed that Nathanael Emmons was entirely above or beneath the influence of natural scenery, and have applied to him the remark of Edmund Burke: "There is no heart so hard as that of a thorough-bred metaphysician." But his sermons abound with illustrations from the fields and the streams, "fire and hail, snow and vapors, gentle showers, stormy winds and rolling billows." He aimed to imitate the example of him who spake as never man spake, and of whom Emmons remarks:

"Sensible that figurative language is the voice of nature, and best adapted to explain and illustrate whatever is dark and obscure, he made a free use of images, which spread much light and perspicuity upon all the subjects he handled. He borrowed his images, however, not from music, painting, poetry, or any of the arts which are confined to the learned few, but from the most familiar appearances and productions of nature, which lie open and common to every observer."[2]

On another occasion, this abstract reasoner remarks:

"Whenever any of mankind behold the beauty of God's goodness, they immediately discover a divine glory spread over all his works. How often do those who are called out of darkness into marvellous light, stand and admire the works of creation, on account of the moral beauty they then see in them, but never saw before. A clear view of the beauty of the Lord never fails to put good men into the sensible enjoyment of the world. Viewing it as his world, and as full of his goodness, it gives them as much satisfaction as if it were all actually put into their hands. Hence they ardently desire to see the beauty of the Lord, that the world which often gives them so much trouble, might become a source of the purest pleasure and enjoyment."[3]

It has been also supposed, that as John Calvin gives in his

[1] A History of the Towns of Haddam and East Haddam. By David D. Field, Pastor of the Church in Haddam, pp. 8, 9. See a "considerable and awful" account of these "Moodus noises," in a letter from Rev. Mr. Hosmer, Pastor at Haddam, to Rev. Dr. Prince, of Boston, Aug. 13, 1729, and also in another letter from "a worthy gentleman;" recorded in Trumbull's History of Connecticut, Vol. II. pp. 92, 93.

[2] Original Edition of Collected Works, Vol. I. p. 3.

[3] Ibid. Vol. VI. pp. 317, 318.



Digitized by Google

writings no evidence that he ever felt the influences of Mont Blanc and the Lake of Geneva, and of the legends connected with them, so Nathanael Emmons was insensible to such superstitions as were connected with the "Moodus Noises." No one, on the perusal of his *a priori* argument for the divine existence, or of several passages against the indulgence of the fancy, would suppose that he ever allowed his imagination a moment's recess from the tutelage of his judgment. It was however characteristic of him to make simple-hearted and childlike expressions, which have but little resemblance to his logical formularies. Once, describing a most unpleasant dilemma in which he was involved, and from which he was extricated by expressing a thought that dropped into his mind suddenly, at the very instant when alone it could avail, he said, in a tone which one would have expected from Izaak Walton, "I do believe it was an immediate suggestion of a good angel." He often made the remark: "I do not believe in signs, but I would rather not see the new moon over my left shoulder."

Whatever may have been the real or imaginary sounds in certain parts of East Haddam, the neighborhood in which young Emmons passed his school days was noted for the Sabbath stillness that reigned in it. In recent times the noise of manufactories and of steamboats disturbs the silence of the villages and the river farms, but the road over which he walked to the commanding hilltop where stood his favorite parish meeting-house, still winds through a country as silent as an oriental steppe. These still scenes allured him to a thoughtful and pensive mood. Through his long life he remained fond of a serene and quiet home. He chose to labor as a minister in cultivating some retired field, where he might think more and talk less. The scenery and the history of "Old Haddam" have affected his entire life.

§ 3. *The importance of Haddam. The influences which have been exerted upon it, particularly the influence of the Brainerds; their influence on the Emmons family.*

The Gazetteers of the day notice the fisheries, the navigation, the manufacturing establishments, the granite quarries of the

Digitized by Google

tract of country once called Haddam, but they fail to herald its real glory. Dr. Emmons was wont to rejoice that his native township was distinguished for its Puritan spirit. The hard soil, the bracing air, the pure waters of New England have done much in forming its peculiar character, but the religious habits of its fathers have done more. They have started an influence which will continue to flow onward, and will be felt, even where it is not recognized. The Old Haddam-settlement may be regarded as a representative region. It represents that part of our land, which, like ancient Numidia, may be called "*arida matrix leonum.*" It exhibits the power which has been exerted over this entire country by our small Puritan communities. It illustrates the importance of sustaining with augmented vigor the schools and churches in these rural districts, which have sent forth such a penetrating energy through the world. It is estimated that Deacon Daniel Brainerd, the grandfather of David, and one of the original proprietors of Haddam, has had more than thirty-three thousand descendants. Many of them have attained high distinction in church and state. Among the natives of the region formerly called Haddam, who have been liberally educated, are David Brainerd, who alone gives importance to a community; Nehemiah Brainerd, a pastor in Eastbury (Glastenbury), Connecticut, who was a classical instructor of David, his younger brother; John Brainerd, an eminent minister, who succeeded his brother David in the Indian mission, and was for twenty-six years a trustee of Princeton College;[1] Nathanael Emmons; Edward Dorr Griffin, Professor at Andover, and President of Williams College; his brother also, George G. Griffin, a noted lawyer and

[1] "I once heard the Hon. John Dickinson, Chief Judge of the Middlesex County Court of Connecticut, and son of the Rev. Mr. Dickinson, of Norwalk, say, 'that the establishment of Princeton College was owing to the sympathy felt for David Brainerd, because the authorities of Yale College would not give him his degree, and that the plan of the college was drawn up in his father's house.' There is evidence that the Rev. Aaron Burr said, after the rise of Princeton College, that it would never have come into existence, had it not been for the expulsion of David Brainerd from Yale College. It is a significant fact, that three of the men who were conspicuous in their sympathy and efforts for Brainerd, were the first three Presidents of Princeton College: Jonathan Dickinson, Aaron Burr, and Jonathan Edwards." See "The Genealogy of the Brainerd Family in the United States, with numerous sketches of individuals, by Rev. David D. Field, D. D., member of the Historical Societies of Connecticut, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania."—pp. 265, 266.

Digitized by Google

theological writer in New York city; Jeremiah Gates Brainard, a Judge of the Superior Court of Connecticut, and the father of John Gardiner Calkins Brainard, "the gentle poet of the gentle stream;" James Brainard Taylor, and other men of no inferior note among the living as well as the dead.

As the grandfather of David Brainerd was the minister of Haddam for twenty-four years; as the brother-in-law of David Brainerd, Mr. Phineas Fisk the eminent "tutor," was pastor of the same old church for the same number of years; as the father of David Brainerd was a man eminent for his gifts, and as there have been numerous intermarriages between the Brainerd and the other ancient families of that region, it is reasonable to believe that the household to which this missionary belonged, has left a deep, decided impress upon all the townships into which Old Haddam is now divided. The father of Dr. Emmons, being a deacon of a church in East Haddam, often administered the sacramental emblems to David Brainerd's sisters and other relatives, and probably to the missionary himself. He felt the profoundest veneration for that missionary, and was one of the few original subscribers for the Memoir of Brainerd by President Edwards. That Memoir was published four years after Nathanael Emmons was born. It was the first book in which he ever saw his father's name printed. As he rose into boyhood, he did not find many "*sensation volumes*" in his father's library. Janeway's "Tokens for Children," might have interested him, but the Memoir which so often reminded him of his native town and native parish, and favorite meeting-house, and the road to the Meeting-house hill, must have interested him still more. It was probably among the most decisive books by which his youthful character was formed. "I might mention the *apostles*, Luther and Calvin, *David Brainerd*, and many other missionaries" — this is a specimen of the manner in which he was wont to name his missionary townsman. It is probable, indeed, that the missionary life of Brainerd suggested and formed the peculiar missionary policy of Emmons.

The following circumstances may indicate some of the methods in which he, as every faithful Millington boy, was attracted to the history of Brainerd.

Digitized by Google

Jerusha Brainerd, the favorite sister of David, was married to Samuel Spencer of East Haddam, and lived in that town from the year 1732, to 1747. This was the sister of whom President Edwards speaks in his account of Brainerd's last illness:

Israel Brainerd made a farewell visit to his brother David and "brought to him the sorrowful tidings of his sister Spencer's death at Haddam; a sister, between whom and him had long subsisted a peculiarly dear affection, and much intimacy in spiritual matters, and whose house he used to make his own, when he went to Haddam, his native place. He had heard nothing of her sickness till this report of her death. But he had these comforts, together with the tidings, namely, a confidence of her being gone to heaven, and an expectation of his soon meeting her there."[1]

Martha Brainerd, another sister of David, was married to General Joseph Spencer of East Haddam, August 2, 1738; and she resided there fourteen or sixteen years. Her husband, who died January 13, 1789, aged 74, is thus described by Dr. Field: —

"General Joseph Spencer married a daughter of the Worshipful Mr. Brainerd, and in several respects resembled his father-in-law. From the native strength of his mind and diligent improvement of the means of information in his power, he became well versed in those branches of knowledge which were important in the stations he was called to fill. For thirty-five years he was Judge of Probate for the district of East Haddam and Colchester. In 1758, he went into the northern army in the capacity of a major under Colonel Nathan Whiting, and the two following years as a lieutenant-colonel, in the last French war; and acquired the character of a brave and good officer. In 1775, in the war of the Revolution, he was appointed a brigadier, and in 1776, a major-general in the army of the United States. He resigned his commission two years after. In 1779, he was a member of Congress. In 1766, he was elected into the Council, and held a seat in it, excepting when a member of Congress, till his death. His civil and military offices were an honorable testimony to his abilities. These, however, did not constitute his greatest glory. He loved the pure doctrines and obeyed the pure precepts of the gospel. Few have given clearer evidence of a change of heart. He early made a public profession of religion, and served many years as a deacon in the church in Millington. He died, as might be expected, in the full faith of a blessed resurrection."[2] "Tradition represents that the influence of

[1] Edwards's Works, Vol. X. p. 396.

[2] A History of the Towns of Haddam and East Haddam, by David D. Field, A. M. Pastor of the church in Haddam, pp. 23, 24.

Digitized by Google

General Spencer was very great in that place [Millington] in promoting religious order and the sanctification of the Sabbath." [1]

The families of his two sisters and other relatives often attracted David Brainerd to the Millington parish. He says in his journal:

"About the 15th of April, 1733, I removed from my father's house to East Haddam, where I spent four years; but still, 'without God in the world,' though, for the most part, I went a round of secret duty. I was not much addicted to the company and amusements of the young; but this I know, that when I did go into such company, I never returned with so good a conscience as when I went. It always added new guilt, made me afraid to come to the throne of grace, and spoiled those good frames with which I was wont sometimes to please myself. But, alas! all my good frames were but self-righteousness, not founded on a desire for the glory of God." [2]

It was in the native parish of Dr. Emmons, who afterward signalized himself in advocating certain theories of "disinterested love," and of the "inherent excellence of virtue," that David Brainerd penned in his journal some of those remarks, which were so well fitted to prepare the Millington deacon's son for these his favorite theories. On a Sabbath day in 1742, Brainerd wrote thus in Millington:—

"At noon I longed for sanctification and conformity to God. O that is THE ALL, THE ALL. The Lord help me to *press after God* forever." [3]

Having spent at East Haddam the three days before his first departure on his Indian mission, he writes, February 2, 1743:—"Preached my farewell sermon last [Tuesday] night, at the house of an aged man, who had been unable to attend on the public worship for some time. This morning spent the time in prayer, almost wherever I went; and having taken leave of friends, I set out on my journey towards the Indians." "On the road I felt an uncommon pressure of mind; I seemed to struggle hard for some pleasure in something here below, and seemed loth to give up all for gone; saw I was evidently throwing myself into all hardships and distresses in my present undertaking. I thought it would be less difficult to lie down in the grave; but yet I chose to go, rather than stay." [4]

[1] The Genealogy of the Brainerd Family in the United States, with numerous Sketches of Individuals. By Rev. David D. Field, D. D., Member of the Historical Societies of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, p. 252.

[2] President Edwards's Works, Vol. X. p. 35.

[3] Ibid. p. 77.

[4] Ibid. pp. 85, 86.

Digitized by Google

On his return from Kaunaumeek in March, 1774, Brainerd writes at Salisbury:

"Here another messenger met me, and informed me of the vote of another congregation, to give me an invitation to come among them upon probation for settlement. Was somewhat exercised in mind with a weight and burden of care." "This congregation," President Edwards adds, "was that at Millington, near Haddam. They were very earnestly desirous of his coming among them." It "was near his native town and in the midst of his friends."[1]

Statements like the preceding could not fail to interest the young men of Millington in the preacher whom their fathers loved to hear. Young Emmons and his comrades must have formed in their minds a pleasing image of Brainerd riding on the 17th of April, 1744, from his old home into Millington Parish, in order to deliver a Tuesday Lecture. "I feared," writes the despondent missionary, that "I should never have assistance enough to get through. But, contriving to ride alone, at a distance from the company that was going, I spent the time in lifting up my heart to God. Had not gone far, before my soul was abundantly strengthened with those words: 'If God be for us, who can be against us.' I went on confiding in God; and fearing nothing so much as self-confidence. In this frame I went to the house of God, and enjoyed some assistance. Afterwards felt the spirit of love and meekness in conversation with some friends."[2]

Five months before his death, Brainerd made his final visit to Millington Parish, and there writes:

"Lord's day, May 17 [1747]. Spent the forenoon at home, being unable to attend public worship. At this time, God gave me such an affecting sense of my own vileness, and the exceeding sinfulness of my heart, that there seemed to be nothing but sin and corruption within me. 'Innumerable evils compassed me about;' my want of spirituality and holy living, my neglect of God, and living to myself.—All the abominations of my heart and life seemed to be open to my view; and I had nothing to say, but, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'—Towards noon, I saw, that the grace of God in Christ, is infinitely free towards sinners, and such sinners as I was. I also saw, that God is the supreme good, that in his presence is life; and I began to long to die, that I might *be with him*, in a state of freedom from all sin. Oh how a small glimpse of his excellency refreshed my soul! Oh how worthy is the blessed God

[1] President Edwards's Works, Vol. X. pp. 135, 136.
[2] Ibid. p. 137.

Digitized by Google

to be loved, adored, and delighted in, for himself, for his own divine excellences!"

"Though I felt much dulness, and want of a spirit of prayer, this week, yet I had some glimpses of the excellency of divine things; and especially one morning, in secret meditation and prayer, the excellency and beauty of holiness, as a likeness to the glorious God, was so discovered to me, that I began to long earnestly to be in that world where holiness dwells in perfection. I seemed to long for this perfect holiness, not so much for the sake of my own happiness, although I saw clearly that this was the greatest, yea, the only happiness of the soul, as that I might please God, live entirely to him, and glorify him to the utmost stretch of my rational powers and capacities."[1]

### § 4. *The Pastors of the Emmons Family.*

Emmons was only two years old when the preceding words of Brainerd were written. They show the state of the moral atmosphere in which his childhood and youth were spent. They bear a striking resemblance to many of his own instructions. He was educated by the scenes and the men around him, more than by schools and lectures. The earliest impressions produced upon his native Parish, were by pastors imbued with the theological life and enterprise of New England.

#### Rev. Timothy Symmes.

A good illustration of the wide sweep of influences which have started from the New England clergy, is furnished by Rev. Timothy Symmes the first pastor of the Millington Church. He was the great-grandson of the second minister of Charlestown, Mass., who was born in Canterbury, England, and who had a son and also a grandson both pastors of the church in Bradford, Mass. The Millington clergyman was born in Scituate, Mass., where his father and grandfather resided; was graduated at Harvard College in 1733, and was ordained at Millington, Dec. 2, 1736, soon after the church was instituted. During the great revival of religion which prevailed in New England a few years after his ordination, he became too highly excited, "and he prosecuted

[1] President Edwards's Works, Vol. X. pp. 381, 382.

Digitized by Google

his work with a zeal not according to knowledge. This gave rise to difficulties which ended in his dismission at the close of 1743." He preached afterwards for a time at Springfield, N. J., and also, it is said, at Ipswich, Mass., where he died in 1753. He married Mary Cleaves, a daughter of Capt. John Cleaves of Long Island. His eldest son was the celebrated John Cleaves Symmes, who was born, according to one account, at Millington, July 21, 1742, and who died at Cincinnati Feb. 26, 1814, and was buried at the North Bend. This eminent patriot was a soldier of the revolution, and was at the battle of Saratoga. He became a Judge of the Superior Court of New Jersey, and a Representative from that State in the United States Congress. He purchased an immense tract of land in the Miami country of Ohio, and he devised and prosecuted the most admirable plans for the improvement of that entire State. He was at one time a Judge in the "North West Territory." He married a daughter of Governor Livingston of New Jersey, and was the father of the wife of William Henry Harrison, late President of the United States.

The second son of the Millington minister was Timothy, who was the father of John Cleaves Symmes, a captain in the war of 1812, somewhat distinguished at the battle of Brandywine and at the sortie of Fort Erie, but more notorious as a lecturer on the "Hollow Earth." He caused to be published a tract of 168 pages entitled "Symmes's Theory of Concentric Spheres, demonstrating that the earth is hollow, habitable within, and widely opened about the poles." He died May 28, 1829, at Hamilton, Ohio, where a monument, surmounted with a globe open at the poles, marks his resting-place.[1] There lived in the secluded towns of New England, many clergymen whose descendants exhibited a like diversity as well as extent of influence.

## Rev. Hobart Estabrook.

The second minister of Millington was Rev. Hobart Estabrook,

[1] There is some discrepancy in the accounts given of Rev. Timothy Symmes and his family, in the New England Historical and Genealogical Register, Vol. XIII. pp. 136, 137; the Historical Magazine, Vol. I. pp. 154, 155; Rev. Mortimer Blake's History of the Mendon Association, p. 110; Rev. Dr. Field's History of Haddam and East Haddam, p. 34; and a MS. letter of Dr. Field.



Digitized by Google

a son of Rev. Samuel Estabrook, first minister of Canterbury, Conn. He was graduated at New Haven in 1736, ordained at Millington Nov. 20, 1745. All the biographical notices of him confirm the truth of his epitaph: "A wise, faithful and good minister of Jesus Christ, who served his glorious Lord twenty years in Millington, and fell asleep with the sweet calm and support of Divine grace on Jan. the 28th, 1766, in the 50th year of his age." The dwelling-house of Mr. Estabrook is yet standing, and the neat panels of his study and parlor retain those marks of good taste and aristocratic style which characterized the clergy of his day. For twenty years, he was the pastor of Nathanael Emmons, and is said to have given him much private instruction. It is interesting to trace the character of a man up to the most hidden fountains from which any part of it has flowed. When Nathanael Emmons was thirteen years of age, his pastor delivered and published a Discourse (still preserved) of which the following is the title:

"The Praying Warrior; a Sermon preached at Millington, in East Haddam, May 30th, 1758, at the desire of Major Joseph Spencer, and the other Officers and Company under him, before the Expedition against Canada (8vo. pp. 23, New Haven, 1758)."

It is easy to surmise, that such a discourse, pronounced amid such martial scenes, produced a deep impression upon the mind of the deacon's son. He imbibed early in life, a dread and an abhorrence of the French nation. His father and pastor cherished the same. Through his long life he evinced an hereditary hatred of French Politics. His sermons during the administrations of Adams and Jefferson overflow with the same sentiments that animated Gen. Joseph Spencer, and thrilled the hearts of "the other officers and company under him." Few men have been more affected than Emmons by even the incidental scenes of their boyhood.

### Rev. Diodate Johnson.

But Nathanael seems to have felt a more enthusiastic interest in the third minister of Millington, Rev. Diodate Johnson, a son

Digitized by Google

of Rev. Stephen Johnson of Lyme, Conn. This youtnful student was a Senior while Emmons was a Freshman at Yale College, and was a Tutor while Emmons was a Sophomore or Junior, in 1765–6. He was born in the same year with Emmons, 1745, graduated in 1764, ordained at Millington July 2, 1767. He was "eminent as a scholar and divine and disputant and preacher." Dr. Field says of him: "Possessed of superior abilities and ardent piety, Mr. Johnson bade fair to be a distinguished ornament and blessing to the church. But his bright prospects were soon eclipsed in the mysterious providence of God. A consumption closed his life, Jan. 15, 1773, at the age of 28, and in the sixth year of his ministry.[1] He was struck with death, while sitting down and reading that solemn 'meditation and prayer, suited to the case of a dying Christian,' which is recorded in Doddridge's 'Rise and Progress of Religion, etc.'" — Among the records of persons admitted to his church is the following notice, written in Mr. Johnson's distinct exact hand: "*August 6th*, 1769, *was received Nathanael Emmons, Jr.*"

§ 5. *The Church of the Emmons Family: The Church Confession.*

As the pastors of the second church in East Haddam were men of extensive ministerial connections, so the church itself was one of the true ecclesiastical spirit. Now that the lines of travel have lessened the relative importance of the parish, as many rural precincts of New England have lost their comparative dignity, it is difficult to retain a right estimate of the intelligence and comprehensive aims that formerly characterized the church. Its members evidently addicted themselves to theological discussion, and to the care of souls. It is easy to discern the influence of their acts on the young divine who was nurtured in its bosom.

In 1814 Dr. Field wrote: "There has never been in Haddam nor East Haddam, so far as I can learn, a general revival of religion. The great revival seventy years ago reached [these] towns, but produced no extensive effects. God has usually taken

[1] A History of the Towns of Haddam and East Haddam etc., p. 35; also, A Statistical Account of Middlesex County, p. 80.

Digitized by Google

his elect here and brought them singly unto Zion."[1] But without any unusual excitement, the Millington church had pursued a course of steady, noiseless, continuous exertion for the purity of its members.[2] It never adopted the Half Way Covenant, but "Dec. 12, 1746, voted that baptized persons be accounted subjects of discipline;"[3] and, about twenty years afterward, "resolved that the following words be added to and accounted a part of" their Church Covenant, namely: "that all baptized persons are under the Church watch, consequently subject to the reprehensions, admonitions, and censures thereof for their healing and amendment as need shall require. [Cambridge Platform, Art. XII.] Yet such persons are not to be admitted to special ordinances, on their own account, until they make a credible profession of their faith and repentance, in manner as all others do, as is specified in the said [church] covenant." That covenant is an elaborate, though not an eminently doctrinal compilation. The following supplementary articles, which Nathanael Emmons publicly adopted, and his father assisted in introducing into the constitution of the church, have started in his mind many lengthened discussions:

"And as to discipline, we agree that Church Government or Rule is placed by Christ in the Officers of the Church, (viz.) such as are vested with office power, and from thence it is, in the Scriptures, they are called Rulers. And the power Christ hath committed to them is to feed and rule the Church of God; as by calling them together and ordering therein in all things necessary to order and government in the Church. And that it belongs to them to examine any officers or members, before they be received by the Church, — to receive accusations (if there be any needful to be brought to the Church), and when any are brought, and

[1] A History of the Towns of Haddam and East Haddam, p. 40.

[2] Dr. Emmons has been condemned, sometimes, for preaching on the *evangelical graces* more than on the *moral* virtues. He did give a peculiar prominence to the *distinctive* duties of *Christianity*, and did not so often preach on the *common* duties of the *moralist*. He had been educated in this way. More than a half century after he had left the church of his native town, that church, having declined from its pristine elevation, passed a vote excommunicating one of its female members, and specifying seven distinct charges against her, of which the sixth is expressed thus: "Breach of the *fourth* commandment in pursuing her husband through the fields *on the Sabbath*, for the purpose of beating him."

[3] Church Records.

Digitized by Google

regularly heard and tried, they are to pass before the Church [for] their judgment, and [the Rulers are] to publish and pronounce the will of God as to the sentence, with the consent of the Church.

"For, taking into the Church, and casting out, and restoring, and admonishing offenders, &c., are acts of the same power, and belong to office power, though not without the consent of the Church. For in a well regulated, organized Church, no acts can be consummated without the pastor (or officers of the Church), and the major part of the brethren, then present, consenting and agreeing thereto. And we agree that the pastor hath power to cite evidences, in order for the regular trial of cases, which are regularly brought to the Church. And that the Gospel requires two or three evidences, to prove a cause to the Church, and they are not to condemn under the same.

"Further we agree, that it is agreeable to our minds that our pastor should attend and associate with the Association of this Circuit in their sessions, and on the Consociation when desired by the Moderator thereof. And we would disclaim the independent and Brownistick notion of judging our Pastor, [that judgment] requiring office power, as well as the Brotherhood; and is not the part of a particular Church, but of a Council. And therefore we agree that, in all cases wherein any just objections [arise] relative to our Pastor, as to his personal conduct, principles, or office (if any should ever arise), such causes shall be determined by the Council of the Consociation of this Circuit, being regularly called for that purpose, as also in all such cases wherein our Pastor is personally concerned, and therefore barred from acting. But in all other cases, which may happen in this Church, wherein counsel may be needed, we agree to reserve to this Church the liberty to call a Council out of any of the Churches of Christ wherever we think proper for advice."

### § 6. *The Ancestors ana Relatives of Emmons; their Pursuits in Life and Influence upon him.*

Leaving now the obvious influences exerted on the mind of Emmons by the town and the church of his early love, let us come to the more intimate associations of his family.

"My father's name was Samuel Emmons, and my mother's maiden name was Ruth Cone. I was the sixth son, and the twelfth and youngest child of my parents." — *Emmons's Memoir of Himself.*

The biographer of Dr. Ralph Wardlaw has traced the ancestry



Digitized by Google

of that divine, on the mother's side, up to King James the Fifth, from whom Ralph was the ninth in descent. But Dr. Emmons, who was not given to "endless genealogies," has left no intimation which enables us to go beyond the modest name of Ruth Cone, in the line of his maternal progenitors. Ruth Cone satisfied him, nor did he care to rise so high as to his grandfather in the line of Samuel Emmons.

We learn, however, from other records, that his ancestors were of the substantial yeomanry of New England, were rigid Puritans, remarkable for longevity and the virtues tending to secure it. He inherited from them a firm constitution. He was early invigorated by the ancestral discipline of the farm; and he would probably have never performed his rare amount of hard thought, had it not been for the hard work to which himself and his fathers had been inured.

The following is the family record, as gleaned from various printed documents and private manuscripts:

There was a Thomas Emmons admitted a freeman in Boston, May 26, 1652. He died May 11, 1664. There was another Thomas Emmons, perhaps a son of the preceding, who resided in Cambridge, Mass., whose wife was named Mary, and whose daughter Mary was born in Cambridge, November 26, 1683. He is *supposed* to have been the father of Samuel Emmons, who was the grandfather of Dr. Nathanael. But this is not certain. We only know that Samuel, the grandfather of Nathanael, removed from Cambridge near the latter part of the seventeenth century. "He is mentioned, Oct. 15, 1705, as having been admitted into full communion in the church [the first church in East Haddam], together with his wife, whose name is not given."[1] He lived to the age of ninety-six years. He was the father of Samuel; Jonathan, who joined the church of East Haddam, July 28, 1721, and married Rachel Griswold, Jan. 2, 1728; Mary, who was baptized May 7, 1704, and who married Mr. Gates; Nathanael, who was baptized May 7, 1704, married Elizabeth Welles, Sept. 21, 1727, and joined the church, Aug. 24, 1777; Ebenezer, who was baptized Feb. 2, 1706–7; and Mehitabel, baptized Feb. 19, 1709–10.

Samuel Emmons, son of the emigrant from Cambridge, and father of Dr. Nathanael, married Ruth Cone, Sept. 14, 1721. He became a member of the first church in East Haddam, July 11, 1731. His wife became

[1] MS. Letters of Rev. Dr. Field and Rev. Lucius R. Paige.

Digitized by Google

a member, Sept. 22, 1723. The five elder children were baptized on her account. He died in the summer of 1767. His children were:[1]

Dorothy, born Sept. 18, 1722; baptized Sept. 22, 1723; admitted to the Millington Church, June 24, 1753; married to Enoch Arnold, of Millington Parish.

Elizabeth, born March 6, 1724; baptized April 19, 1724; admitted to the Millington Church, Nov. 12, 1752; married, Feb. 3, 1750, to Peter Spencer, of Millington Parish.

Ebenezer, born Sept. 18, 1725; baptized Oct. 31, 1725; married Susanna Spencer, April 4, 1754; joined the Millington Church, Aug. 22, 1790; died Nov. 13, 1809, aged 84. He was the father of ten children. He was the grandfather of Ebenezer Emmons, M. D., Professor of Natural History in Williams College, author of "Manual of Geology," "Manual of Mineralogy," "Reports" on the Geology of North Carolina, the Mammals of Massachusetts, etc. etc.

Samuel, born Nov. 20, 1727; baptized March 10, 1728; died Nov. 7, 1806, aged 79; a member of the Millington Church. He was the father of Major Samuel Emmons, who bore a striking resemblance in person and in character to his uncle, Dr. Nathanael, and died July 2, 1850, in his 89th year.

Mary, born Feb. 6, 1730; baptized April 29, 1730; died unmarried in Millington.

Daniel, baptized June 25, 1732; married Mary Cone, April 2, 1761; died December 18, 1816, aged 84. He was the especial benefactor of Nathanael.

Ruth, born in 1733; admitted to the Millington Church, Feb. 14, 1768; married to Abner Chapman, of Colchester; died May 13, 1796, aged 63.

A son (name not recorded); baptized June 30, 1734; probably died in infancy.

Jonathan, baptized March 14, 1736; probably died young.

Hannah, admitted to the Millington Church, Feb. 14, 1768; married to William Cowdry, Sept. 18, 1760; died in Millington.

Sibyl, baptized June 6, 1742; died Oct. 1, 1812, aged 70.

Nathanael, born May 1, 1745.

After the birth of all his children, and after the death of his wife, Ruth Cone, in 1757,[2] Samuel Emmons married the second time, and in the

[1] New England Historical and Genealogical Register, Vol. XIII. p. 127; also, a MS. Letter of Rev. Dr. D. D. Field.

[2] "I find [on the Town and Church Records of Haddam], but one Ruth Cone of an age to marry Samuel Emmons. She was baptized July 16, 1704; the daughter

Digitized by Google

family burial-ground, which is on a slight elevation of land overlooking the beautiful valley of the "Meadow Brook," is the following inscription on the grave-stone of his second wife:[1]

In Memory of Mrs.
Rachel, wife of
Ensign Samuel
Jones; 2d wife of Dr.
Benijn. Kneeland; 3d.
wife of Mr. Nath'll.
Man; 4th wife of Dn.
Samll. Emmons.
Who died Febr. 25th,
1765. Aged 65
years.

On the first page of Rev. Hobart Estabrook's "Record of Church votes" in Millington, are the following notices of Dr. Emmons's father:

"At a Church meeting, February 14th, 1745, regularly warned, the Church repeatedly made choice of Deacon Samuel Emmons for their deacon, who had removed for a time out of the parish, but has since returned."

"At a Church meeting regularly warned, September 23d, 1748, voted, that Deacon Samuel Emmons, Deacon Daniel Gates, and Sergeant Joseph Cone, be a committee of the Church to assist the Pastor in inquiring into matters of uneasiness and offence, and prepare matters, if needful, to be laid before the Church."

On the first page of Rev. Diodate Johnson's "Record of Votes," it is written:

"Nov. 20, A. D. 1767 — At a Church meeting regularly warned, the Church renewed their choice of Col. Joseph Spencer, to be their deacon in the room of Deacon Samuel Emmons, deceased, which office he then publicly signified his acceptance of."

It appears from other sources, that Samuel Emmons was chosen first deacon of the Millington Church, when the church was formed in 1733,

of Jared Cone, and the grand-daughter of Daniel, one of the first settlers of Haddam." —MS. Letter of Mr. D. Williams Patterson. Conant Cone, the father of the late Rev. Spencer Houghton Cone, D.D., of New York, was a native of East Haddam, a descendant of the same Daniel Cone, one of the original proprietors of Haddam.

[1] This step-mother of Dr. Emmons was a woman of sterling character. In his old age he often spoke with gratitude of her judicious advice to him, and kindly restraints upon him. He was by nature irritable, and she taught him to remain silent when angry. Even when an octogenarian, if he was tempted to irascibility, his bald head would redden at its very crown, he would remember his step-mother and say nothing.

Digitized by Google

only two years after his profession of religion; that he subsequently spent some years out of the Millington Parish,[1] that he afterward returned to the parish, was rechosen to the office of deacon, remained in the office twenty-two years, until his death, when his place was supplied by the brother-in-law of David Brainerd.

Nathanael was born soon after his father had returned to Millington. During the first seventeen years of his life he lived in a two storied house, thirty-six feet long by twenty feet wide, on a knoll that overlooks a well watered meadow surrounded in the distance by graceful hills. He retained through subsequent years, a fondness for the location of his old homestead, and when he selected his own residence in Franklin, he was charmed with the thought, that he could look from his study-windows directly toward the familiar windows of his mother's sitting-room. The old Millington house was at the junction of two roads, but was as retired and still as a monastery.

The home of his father during his absence from Millington parish, was a less tranquil but more romantic spot. It was in close proximity to a mill-seat. The father of Dr. Emmons, like the father of Dr. Hopkins, was a miller; but a miller in those days was equal to a senator in these.—"Suppose there are two wheels, the one large and the other small. Suppose it is the nature of the large wheel to stand still of itself, but the nature of the small wheel to move of itself, etc."[2] This is one of several illustrations which the home-loving Nathanael has drawn from the wheel, and he was probably led to these comparisons by a habit of letting his thoughts roll around the machinery of the old mill. But Samuel Emmons was a farmer as well as a miller, and Ruth Cone spun the wool which was taken from her husband's sheep. Now, "a sermon," said the home-bred Nathanael, "should be like a fleece of wool; take up one part, and the other parts will hang to it." We are moved to smile at many of his homely illustrations. They came from his childlike love for the scenes of his homestead, and his fond-

[1] The first eight of Samuel Emmons's children were baptized by Rev. Mr. Hosmer, of East Haddam, before Mr. Emmons connected himself with the Millington Church; the eleventh child was baptized by Mr. Hosmer while Mr. Emmons was temporarily absent from Millington.

[2] Emmons's Works, Vol. II. p. 6.

Digitized by Google

ness for the handicraft of his fathers. They are the reappearances of the farmer's boy in the dignified theologian. When he wished to repeat again and again his favorite idea that all the thoughts in a sermon should be bound into a firm tissue, one topic leading and holding fast to the next, he remembered his old garden slope; and "a sermon" he said, "should be like a bunch of onions tied together without a string; — take hold of one end of it, and it will all hang together." The thoughts of the sermon must be indissolubly connected.

"It takes a hatchel to get out the tow," was his common remark in allusion to his method of criticizing his pupils, and separating the coarser from the finer parts of their sermons or dispositions. — "It is now a fanning and winnowing time among the churches," said the old pastor as he recommended a separation of the tares from the wheat. He now and then uttered beautiful words that are fragrant with the garden scenes of his youth: "Those who keep their hearts in the love of God, while they sit under the bower of Christ, sit under it with great delight, and his fruit is sweet to their taste, and they joyfully anticipate the glory and blessedness of heaven."

It was interesting to see that even his sports on the farm mingled themselves through life with his professional associations. "I can *chase* the game much better than I can *start* it," was a saying which he was wont to utter, in illustration of his reliance on other men for originating his own trains of thought. "When I was on my first journey to Franklin as a candidate," he said in his old age, still retaining his childlike fondness for old superstitions, "I was very bashful, and full of self-distrust. I had heard that the parish was divided into two hostile parties, contending fiercely with each other. I could not so much as hope that they would unite in my favor, for I was nobody but little Nat. Emmons. But the night before I reached the town, I dreamed, that while riding along I saw a quail come out from the bushes on the right hand side of the road before me. Presently I saw another quail come out from the left side, and stand near the other. I asked myself: 'What if I can catch both of those quails at once?' I started on my feet, took off my three-cornered hat, walked softly to the quails, covered them both and took them. I awoke, rode into Franklin the next day, quite relieved of my

Digitized by Google

fear about uniting those two parties." We shall see in the sequel that the reality was stranger than the dream, and we have already noticed that Emmons had a susceptibility to the legends of "Matchit Moodus."[1]

It is noticeable that all the relatives of Nathanael Emmons who have been now mentioned are without a middle name. Before the year 1800, one good Christian designation was ordinarily thought to be enough. The fashion of the present day is unlike the old. In the public schools of an American city it was found, a few years ago, that eighty-three in a hundred of the pupils had more than one Christian name; twenty-one in a hundred had more than two such names, and only seventeen in a hundred had no such name. Nathanael loved his mother's designation, Ruth Cone. He clung to the usage of his ancestors, and often insisted that John Bunyan was far nobler than John W. Bunyan, and John Calvin better than John I. Calvin. In naming his own children, however, he once departed from his chosen rule in his love to his Millington pastor, and named his second son Diodate Johnson Emmons.

It may be here remarked that while the relatives of Dr. Emmons have been noted for their diffidence, their love of books, their puritanical regularity in religious duties, they have also been addicted to the military art. The theologian himself retained through life a fondness for those military parades at which so many of his relatives have figured as captains, majors, lieutenants. "He was always on the muster-field," writes one of his Franklin parishioners, "when the muster was on the common near the Franklin meeting-house. His white locks, his three cornered hat and small clothes rendered [the aged pastor] an object of curiosity and interest to all." "I remember," says a clergyman who studied theology at Franklin, "that when I revisited my old instructor, after I had become a settled clergyman, I first saw him on the training-field, and was impressed by his gentlemanly bearing as he moved along the line of soldiers, and bowed to the officers." An eminent divine went far out of his way for the sake of a visit to Franklin, and while sitting in the study of the octoge-

[1] See pp. 4, 5, 6.

Digitized by Google

narian, noticed a company of artillery approaching the parsonage. "Open the window," cried the old divine at once, and he rushed with the nimbleness of a boy to look upon the soldiers. The company would have been aggrieved, if the spiritual captain had not smiled upon them. His early loves were the last to die. One of the most charming features of the man at the age of ninety-five, was his fondness for the things that had been associated with Samuel Emmons and Ruth Cone. Each of them was buried in a coffin made of pine wood and painted black. When their son died, almost a hundred years old, he requested that he might be buried in a pine coffin painted black. He chose to lie as his father and mother had lain before him. When he thought of his death, he thought habitually of the "sable coffin." His *home* attachments are a symbol of his theological tastes. He loved the old paths. He deviated from them here and there; not because he loved antiquity less, but because he loved what he deemed the truth more. His departures from the way of his predecessors were made with many a "longing, lingering look behind."

Digitized by Google

## CHAPTER II.

### THE INTERVAL BETWEEN HIS LEAVING THE FARM AND ENTERING THE PASTORATE.

§ 1. *Preparation and Examination for College; his life at College.*

"My mother died when I was about twelve years of age. She was a very sincere, humble, heavenly Christian. Indeed, both of my parents were professors of religion, and exemplary in the general course of their conduct. They gave me much good instruction in piety and virtue, and restrained me from all outward acts of vice and immorality. I was naturally inclined to learning, and took peculiar pleasure in improving my mind, by reading, and by hearing others converse upon instructive subjects. Having such an inquisitive disposition, and being the youngest child in the family, my parents early entertained thoughts of giving me a public education. But while a schoolboy I manifested such a volatile, trifling spirit, that they altered their purpose of sending me to college, and determined to make me a farmer. This deeply wounded my feelings; for I never loved labor, but my heart was set upon study. I revolved in my mind a great many schemes to attain the object of my wishes. I purchased a Latin Accidence and Grammar with my own property, several years before I was permitted to attend a grammar school. At length, I prevailed upon my father to give me leave to study the languages, if I could find an instructor. I went directly to a Latin master [in the vicinity of Hartford], who engaged to fit me for college by the next Commencement. This was in the year 1762, and as late as the month of November. I applied myself closely to my studies through the winter. In the spring, a fellow student left me to study alone under a very negligent teacher. But notwithstanding all my disadvantages, I made so much proficiency as to enter Yale College the next September." — *Memoir of himself.*



Digitized by Google

When the diffident youth was first examined for admission to college, at the Commencement, he was deemed unfit. He was told so. "At once" he said, "I remembered all the promises which I had made to my father that I would never add a burden to his family cares, and I could not bear the thought of going to his house with such a mortifying tale. One of my examiners, a tutor, noticed my sad face, and kindly followed me out of the room. 'Whom did you study with,' was his question. I told him. 'That man,—he is not fit to prepare *any* body for college,' was the tutor's reply, 'but if you will stay here and study with me through the vacation, I will warrant your entrance into the Freshman class.' Then I felt as if I could leap over a stone wall for joy. I staid, studied, and was admitted." [1]

Through his entire college life, however, he suffered much from this inadequate preparation. He was associated with young men who had been trained to early habits of classical study. We have seen that John Treadwell, afterwards Governor of

[1] Professor Olmsted in his Memoir of a classmate of Emmons, writes (Am. Quart. Reg. Vol. XV. p. 228): "On his admission he was presented with a copy of the old Latin laws, on the blank leaf of which were contained the several certificates required by law. The first was that of the Steward, signifying that a bond had been duly delivered to him for the payment of the college bills; and then followed the

*Admittatur* of the President and Tutors, thus:

COLLEGII YALENSIS *Septris* 20, 1763.

Syngrapha, secundum has leges, pro Johanne Treadwell admissionis candidato, data est mihi.

JONTH. FITCH, *Dispensatori*.

COLLEGII YALENSIS, *Septris* 30*mo*, 1763*tio*.

Admittatur Johannes Treadwell, Collegii Yalensis Alumnus,

THOMAS CLAP, *Praeses*.

RICHARD WOODHULL,
JONATHAN LYMAN,
EBENEZER K. WHITE. } *Tutores*."

Both Emmons and Treadwell developed in their Freshman year their native independence and their high spirit, in refusing any more obeisance to the higher classes, than was imperatively required by the college laws. Emmons was arraigned before the Faculty for refusing to go on an errand when he was sent by a Sophomore. He pleaded that the Sophomore sent him on the errand in *a prescribed study-hour*. Emmons was acquitted, the Sophomore was punished, and the whole college was amused.

Digitized by Google

Connecticut, was one of his classmates, and had enjoyed all the means of mental culture which an excellent family, possessing a competent estate, could give him. He became a hearty friend of Emmons. On one occasion, Emmons entered the room of Treadwell and saw President Edwards's Treatise of the Will, lying upon the table. The Treatise had not then been published more than twelve years. "Will you lend me this book," asked Emmons. "*You* cannot understand it," said Treadwell. "But will you lend it to me," rejoined Emmons. It was lent, perused and re-perused, and that was the beginning, so far as we know, of the young student's peculiar course of metaphysical theology.

Another of his classmates was John Trumbull, an eminent jurist and poet. He was the son of a minister, and descended from a long line of clerical ancestors. He was fitted for Yale, before Emmons was fitted for a common academy,[1] and while pursuing his collegiate course he reaped the varied benefits which spring from early and exact discipline. He, as well as Treadwell, took a deep interest in Emmons. "I have learned more about English style from Jack Trumbull, than from any other man," was a frequent saying of the old theologian. In his old age, he often spoke of "Jack" with the tenderest affection.

Still another of his classmates was Samuel Wales, afterwards Professor of Divinity in his Alma Mater. Dr. Wales, also, was the son of a clergyman, and had been carefully trained in the ancient classics from his childhood.

It was to be expected that such men would leave Emmons

[1] "After a course of preparatory study under the direction of his [Trumbull's] father, the two started on a horse for Yale College; the boy, of course, behind. The latter, says the Connecticut Gazette of Sept. 24, 1757, 'passed a good examination, although but little more than seven years of age; but, on account of his youth, his father does not intend he shall at present continue at college.'" — Dr. Bronson's History of Waterbury, p. 441. In 1772–3, Judge Trumbull published a Poem entitled the "Progress of Dullness." In 1782 he published his McFingal. In 1783 he became a member of a Literary Club at Hartford, Conn., to which Col. Humphreys, Barlow, and Dr. Lemuel Hopkins belonged. These writers were called the "Hartford Wits." Judge Trumbull contributed largely to the publications of this club. He received the degree of LL. D. from Yale College in 1818. In his Discourse addressed to the alumni of Yale College in 1860, Dr. Sprague says: "In poetry, the English language has scarcely a richer gem of its kind than *McFingal*, — its author, another Trumbull, a man of splendid intellect and varied acquisitions, and in the power of satire well-nigh unrivalled." pp. 57, 58.

Digitized by Google

in a state of mortifying inferiority, but he had gained, on his "paternal acres," the means of a healthier and a longer life than is commonly given to men who are born in libraries.

Through his college course he did move along under the weight of a faulty classical preparation; still he moved along nearly abreast of those eminent classmates who had spent at their books the time which he had spent in digging rocks. The Hon. David Daggett has informed us, that Judge Trumbull, Governor Treadwell, Dr. Emmons, and Dr. Wales "were the four most distinguished scholars of their class."[1] A more common statement is, that these four men, and Dr. Joseph Lyman, an eminent divine of Hatfield, Mass., were the *five* classmates most noted when at Yale. Professor Kingsley wrote to the Rev. Thomas Williams:[2]

"Nov. 18, 1840. At the time Dr. Emmons was in college, an oration, called the Cliosophic Oration, was pronounced by some one of the Senior class, at the close of their examination for the Bachelor's degree. This exhibition was in July, generally, eight weeks before commencement. This is the oration which Dr. Emmons delivered in 1767. The Valedictory Oration, at that time, was delivered when the class received their Master's degree. Dr. Emmons's class received their Master's degree in 1770, at which time Samuel Wales, afterwards Professor of Divinity, was valedictory Orator. The Valedictory Oration was always in Latin; the Cliosophic Oration sometimes in Latin, and sometimes in English."

The modest and truly characteristic words of Emmons himself in regard to his collegiate progress are simply these:

"I was now [on entering Yale] in the nineteenth year of my age, and enjoyed a good degree of health, which enabled me to pursue my studies without interruption, until I took my first degree, in the year 1767. But though I was pretty studious during my residence at college, yet I could by no means equal a number of my class." — *Memoir of himself.*

Among the other prominent men who were college mates with the subject of this Memoir, who imparted an influence to him,

[1] Sprague's Annals, Vol. I. p. 711.
[2] "Official Character of Rev. Nathanael Emmons, DD.," p. 74.

Digitized by Google

and received an influence from him, were Professor Bezaleel Woodward, Rev. Samuel J. Mills, father of the Missionary, Rev. Joseph Howe of Boston,[1] Dr. Isaac Lewis,[2] Dr. Job Swift,[3] Judge Theodore Sedgwick, Dr. Manasseh Cutler,[4] Judge Jonathan Ingersoll, Jared Ingersoll, LL. D., Dr. Andrew Lee,[5] Dr. Charles Backus,[6] Dr. Timothy Dwight, Dr. David Ely,[7] Dr. David MacClure,[8] Dr. Nathan Strong and Dr. Joseph Buckminster of Portsmouth, N. H. Some of these men remained his steadfast friends through life.

Singular as it now appears, the only Professor in the Institution at that time was Dr. Napthali Daggett, and he assumed the duties of the Presidency, in addition to those of the theological Professorship, during Emmons's Junior year. The tutors who first instructed Emmons were Richard Woodhull, Jonathan Lyman, and Ebenezer Russel White. "All of them were distinguished as scholars and acceptable in their places. Mr. Woodhull and Mr. Lyman, particularly, were great proficients in the mathematics, natural philosophy and astronomy. Mr. Woodhull and Mr. White had become converts, or were inclined to, the theological opinions of the Rev. Robert Sandeman, which at that time were spreading in Connecticut."[9] These tutors were succeeded by Punderson Austin and Diodate Johnson, who, "though no doubt well qualified for their places, found themselves in such difficult circumstances, that, in the summer of the year 1766, they also handed in their resignations."[10] This second class of tutors were succeeded at the close of Emmons's Junior year by Stephen Mix Mitchell, afterwards Chief Justice of the State of Connecticut, Ebenezer Baldwin and Job Lane, three scholars of rare promise, the last two of whom were cut down in the flower of their youth. Judge Trumbull says; "The management of the Institution fell almost entirely into the hands of [these] tutors. They encouraged the study of the English

[1] See Sprague's Annals, Vol. I. pp. 707, 710.
[2] Ibid. pp. 662–668.
[3] Ibid. pp. 640, 645.
[4] Ibid. Vol. II. pp. 15, 19.
[5] Ibid. Vol. I. pp. 668–672.
[6] Ibid. Vol. II. pp. 61, 68.
[7] Ibid. pp. 4–6.
[8] Ibid. pp. 7, 8.
[9] See Prof. Kingsley's History of Yale College in Am. Quart. Register, Vol. VIII. p. 27.
[10] Ibid. pp. 28, 29.



Digitized by Google

Grammar and language, and excited attention to composition and oratory."[1] Under the tutelage of these men, Emmons received an impulse to express his thoughts "in plain and pure and perfect prose."[2]

Rev. Thomas Clap was President of the institution when Emmons entered it. Many of the civilians in the State were vehemently opposed to him; so were many of the clergy, and some of the Corporation. The students were in a tumult during the first two years of Emmons's college life. In his Junior year they presented a request to the Corporation, that their instructors be removed from their places. "The President and Tutors, who with the Professor of theology, then constituted the entire Faculty of the college, thereupon resigned their offices."[3] "I put my name to that paper," said Dr. Emmons *seventy-four* years afterwards, "and I have never regretted it but once, since I did it, and that has been — every hour."[4]

During Emmons's Junior year at college, President Clap published the following account of the course of study pursued there:

[1] Sprague's American Annals, Vol. I. pp. 635, 640.

[2] That Emmons ever actually attained perfection in rhetoric, more than in virtue, he did not believe; yet the modest man allowed himself to use the following rhythmical license, in the following lines; the only rhyme which he is *known* to have indited during his studious life:

My thoughts I can with ease disclose
In plain, and pure, and perfect prose;
But give me e'er so much of time,
I cannot make a single rhyme.
No reason I could ever find
Why nature did so frame my mind,
But that it were to check my pride,
And give me reason for my guide.
This guide ne'er led a man astray,
Who heard its voice and did obey.
But there is something I deem higher,
To which I always will aspire, —
To lead mankind to fear and love
The God who lives and reigns above.

*Blake's History of Mendon Association*, p. 112.

[3] Judge Simeon Baldwin's letter in Sprague's Annals, Vol. I. p. 636.

[4] "Certain it is that, in the last year of his [Clap's] Presidency, while the college charter was attacked, and the press was issuing pamphlets against his administration, more than usual carelessness prevailed among the students, so that perhaps the college never presented a more disorganized state; for which, according to the traditions which old graduates have retained, a party of somewhat inefficient tutors was partly responsible." — Pres. Woolsey's Historical Discourse, pp. 28, 29.

Digitized by Google

The scholars at their admission "are able well to construe and parse Tully's orations, Virgil and the Greek Testament, and understand the rules of common arithmetic. In the first year they learn Hebrew, and principally pursue the study of the languages, and make a beginning in logic and some parts of the mathematics. In the second year they study the languages; but principally recite logic, rhetoric, oratory, geography, and natural philosophy; and some of them make good proficiency in trigonometry and algebra. In the third year they still pursue the study of natural philosophy, and most branches of mathematics. Many of them well understand surveying, navigation, and the calculation of eclipses, and some of them are considerable proficients in conic sections and fluxions. In the fourth year they principally study and recite metaphysics, ethics, and divinity. — The two upper classes exercise their powers in disputing, every Monday in the syllogistic form, and every Tuesday in the forensic." — "The President frequently makes public dissertations upon every subject necessary to be understood to qualify young gentlemen for [the] various stations and employments [of civil life], such as the nature of civil government, the civil Constitution of Great Britain, the various kinds of courts, the several forms of ecclesiastical government which have obtained in the Christian church," etc.[1]

It is obvious that Emmons's course of study at New Haven was not fitted to make him an accomplished scholar, but it was fitted to make him a strong man; not an encyclopædiacal student, but a severe logician. Notwithstanding all the splendor of the apparatus which now dazzles the eyes of the students in our colleges, it is a question whether they would not become more vigorous thinkers, and in some respects greater men, if they would sacrifice their multifarious reading to an exact logical discipline. The profound study of a few abstruse treatises, gave to young Emmons a sharper insight, a firmer grasp, a more independent mind, than he would have gained, perhaps, from the more diversified studies of collegians in our day. It is surprising, however, that more exercises in English composition were not required of him at college. He wrote only two essays while he was at Yale, besides the one oration which he delivered when he took his first degree.

[1] President Woolsey's Historical Discourse, pp. 60, 61. For remarks on the course of study at Yale College from 1720 to 1770, see Memoir of Dr. Hopkins, pp. 13, 14.

Digitized by Google

§ 2. *Professional Education.*

"My father died about three months before I graduated, and left me not the least patrimony, only directing in his will that the expenses of my education should be paid out of his estate. Accordingly, when I left college, I found myself in a state of entire poverty. I had nothing I could call my own, except a very few clothes and a very few books. My parents being both dead, I was totally destitute of any place which I could call my home. My brothers, however, were kind to me, especially my youngest brother,[1] who in a good measure supplied the place and showed the kindness of a father. I was never given to idleness, but always disposed to improve my time in some employment. My natural inclination, in this case, coincided with my situation, and I soon engaged to teach an English school. Having continued in this business seven or eight months, I applied to a clergyman, Rev. Mr. Strong, of Coventry, Connecticut, to instruct me in theology. I lived in his family, and taught his children several months. After this, I spent a year with another noted divine." — *Memoir of himself.*

Dr. Emmons always regarded it as a rare privilege to have *lived in the family*, and shared the familiar counsels of so wise a man as Nathan Strong, of Coventry, the father of Dr. Nathan Strong, of Hartford, and a college classmate of Dr. Samuel Hopkins, of Newport — both of whom were his special friends. The other "noted divine" with whom he "*lived*"[2] and studied, was John Smalley, of Berlin, New Britain Society, Connecticut, a theological pupil of Dr. Bellamy. The following is Emmons's delineation of the process through which he was guided by Dr. Smalley:

"About the time I went to college, I was inclined to adopt Arminian sentiments, and tried with all my might to refute the doctrine of Divine decrees. But early in my collegiate life, I

[1] Daniel. See p. 19. above.

[2] For the force of the word "*lived*," in this connection, see Dr. Bacon's Commemorative Discourse, in the Memorial of the Fiftieth Anniversary of Andover Theological Seminary, pp. 75–80.

Digitized by Google

happily met with President Edwards on the Freedom of the Will, which I read with close attention, and with more than common satisfaction. He almost convinced me of the truth of those Calvinistic doctrines which I had opposed. But not being quite satisfied, I applied to my tutor, Mr. Punderson Austin, who gave me more light upon the doctrine of election than any other person had ever done; and before I left college, I was full in the belief of what I supposed to be true Calvinism. Accordingly, when I first turned my attention to the study of divinity, I applied to Mr. Strong, a well known Calvinist, who directed me to read Willard's and Ridgely's Expositions of the Assembly's Catechism, and other authors, of the same sentiments. After reading such books as these, I thought myself pretty well acquainted with the Calvinistic theory; but when I came to Mr. Smalley's, I found myself in the situation of Apollos, who needed to be instructed more perfectly. Mr. Smalley was a man of a strong and clear mind, who had thoroughly digested Mr. Edwards's writings, and who was well qualified for an instructor. I lived with him several weeks, before I had the least apprehension that he differed in sentiment from those old Calvinistic authors which I had just been reading. But he gradually opened what was then called New Divinity. I was startled, and, with all the strength I had, endeavored to object against the new sentiments he advanced; but he always refuted and generally convinced me. At length I became a thorough convert to his scheme of sentiments, and received his instructions with great avidity." — *Memoir of himself.*

In a more conversational mood Emmons has thus delineated the progress of his mind, as he encountered the strong grasp of his instructor: "For some time all things went on smoothly. At length he began to advance some sentiments which were new to me, and opposed to my former views. I contended with him; but he very quietly tripped me up, and there I was at his mercy. I arose and commenced the struggle anew; but before I was aware of it, I was *floored* again. Thus matters proceeded for some time; he gradually leading me along to the place of light, and I struggling to remain in darkness. He at length succeeded, and I began to see a little light. From that time to the present, the light has been increasing; and I feel assured that

Digitized by Google

the great doctrines of grace which I have preached for fifty years, are in strict accordance with the law and the testimony." "I can never forget the moment when the truth of the New Divinity dawned upon me. I was walking in the open air, when all at once the clouds began to scatter from before the face of the sun, and they have never returned." He often spoke of his intercourse with Dr. Smalley as an incentive to his independent examination of theological problems. "At first," he said, "I walked on crutches altogether; I thought as others had thought before me; but when the light of New Divinity began to appear, I threw away my crutches, and have gone without them ever since." "I remember the very day when I threw them away." He uniformly aimed to cultivate, among his own theological students, the same love of original thought which had been nurtured in himself by Dr. Smalley. "Young ministers," he would say, "feel themselves weak or lame, and they think they must use crutches. But if they would ever do any thing in the world, they must learn to walk alone."

He did not prize the rhetorical, so highly as the theological instructions of Dr. Smalley. He often remarked that when his bosom friend, John Trumbull, visited him at New Britain, the young jurist taught him more than any other man had done, about the structure of a discourse for the pulpit. "My first sermon," he said, "I esteemed a very good one, but when I had read it to Trumbull and another of my classmates, and heard their criticisms, I very tranquilly put it into the fire."

### § 3. *Commencement of his Religious Life.*

One peculiarity in the professional education of Dr. Emmons is, that he began it before he regarded himself as morally fit for it in any degree. He had never even witnessed a revival of religion, and did not suppose himself to have yielded to the more private influences of the Holy Spirit. While he was a member of college, an attempt was made by some thoughtless men to poison the students with arsenic at one of their meals. The evils resulting from this attempt were such as to awaken religious thought in some of his college mates. Soon after this alarm, Rev. George Whitefield visited New Haven, and preached in the

Digitized by Google

chapel.[1] The solemn impression on the students was thus deepened. But Emmons does not appear to have shared in the influences of this scene. He was regarded by others as "almost a Christian;" he was peculiarly revered by his pious classmates. But he speaks of himself in the most unassuming way. These are his words:

"As my godly parents gave me much pious instruction, my mind was early the subject of religious impressions; which always preserved me from gross vices, and even from many smaller irregularities, to which, like other children and youth, I was naturally exposed. I was never noted[2] for falsehood, profaneness, Sabbath breaking, or a great fondness for vain company. I sustained, while a child, while preparing for college, and while I resided there, a pretty fair moral character. Nor was this all. When I was quite young, I had many serious thoughts. I remember well that, by reading the life of a pious youth, I was sensibly struck with a conviction of my great guilt, and the awful thought of dying unprepared, which led me for a while to secret devotions. Though I did not continue long in this state of mind, yet I entertained reverential thoughts of religion, and fully resolved to become, some time or other, truly pious. These resolutions were cherished and strengthened, by a strong desire to be a preacher of the gospel. I felt a peculiar respect for ministers, and thought I should be extremely happy if I could be properly qualified to be one myself. When one of my sisters died of the consumption, my fears about myself were again alarmed; and I had some lively apprehensions of the state of the damned, especially of the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. I used to be much terrified with the prospect of the day of judgment; and my fears constrained me to cry to God in secret to save me from the wrath to come. But when my fears abated, I soon fell into the neglect of this duty.

"Such was the general state of my mind, till I turned my attention more directly towards divinity, and began my theo-

[1] Mr. Whitefield was in America from Sept. 1763, until July 5, 1765.

[2] So far as we can learn he was *noted* for his freedom from "falsehood, profaneness, and Sabbath breaking." Possessing an exuberance of animal spirits, he was playful in his boyhood, but his sports would be regarded, in these days, as very far within the limits of innocent diversion.

Digitized by Google

logical studies. I now had a rational and serious conviction of the great importance of becoming truly religious. It had always been my settled opinion, that saving grace was a necessary qualification for a church member, and much more for a minister of the gospel. Accordingly, when I began to read divinity, I began a constant practice of daily reading the Bible, and of praying to God in secret. With such resolutions, I entertained a hope that God would very soon grant me his special grace, and give me satisfactory evidence of this qualification for the ministry. Nor did I ever indulge a thought of preaching, unless I had some good reason to believe I was the subject of a saving change; for I viewed a graceless minister as a most inconsistent, criminal, and odious character. All this time, however, I had no sense of the total corruption of my heart, and its perfect opposition to God. But one night there came up a terrible thunder storm, which gave me such an awful sense of God's displeasure, and of my going into a miserable eternity, as I never had before. I durst not close my eyes in sleep during the whole night, but lay crying for mercy with great anxiety and distress. This impression continued day after day, and week after week, and put me upon the serious and diligent use of what I supposed to be the appointed means of grace.

"In this state of mind I went to Mr. Smalley's, to pursue my theological studies. There I was favored with his plain and instructive preaching; which increased my concern, and gave me a more sensible conviction of the plague of my own heart, and of my real opposition to the way of salvation revealed in the gospel. My heart rose against the doctrine of divine sovereignty, and I felt greatly embarrassed with respect to the use of means.[1] I read certain books, which convinced me that the best desires and prayers of sinners were altogether selfish, criminal and displeasing to God. I knew not what to do, nor where to go for relief. A deep sense of my total depravity of heart, and of the sovereignty of God in having mercy on whom he will have mercy, destroyed my dependence on men and means, and made me almost despair of ever attaining salvation,

[1] The prominence of this and kindred topics in his religious experience was one cause of their prominence in Emmons's theoretical system, which had a practical basis.

Digitized by Google

or becoming fit for any thing but the damnation of hell. But one afternoon, when my hopes were gone, I had a peculiar discovery of the divine perfections, and of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, which filled my mind with a joy and serenity to which I had ever before been a perfect stranger. This was followed by a peculiar spirit of benevolence to all my fellow men, whether friends or foes. And I was transported with the thought of the unspeakable blessedness of the day when universal benevolence should prevail among all mankind.[1] I felt a peculiar complacence in good men, but thought they were extremely stupid, because they did not appear to be more delighted with the gospel, and more engaged to promote the cause of Christ. I pitied the deplorable condition of ignorant, stupid sinners, and thought I could preach so plainly as to convince everybody of the glory and importance of the gospel. These were my views and feelings about eight months before I became a candidate for the ministry." — *Memoir of himself.*

Having begun to hope, as early as February 1769, that he was a child of God, he made a public profession of his faith six months afterward, and only two months before he preached his first sermon. The night before he preached that sermon he could not sleep one minute. He ever retained his solemn view of the pulpit. It was, in his regard, an awe-inspiring theme.

His entire professional life was affected by the manner of his preparing for it. He adopted the new theology, and experienced the new birth at one and the same time. His heart yielded to the truth, when his mind perceived that truth in the aspect given it by the apostles, rather than by the Mediæval theologians. Hence he always associated the new and biblical theology with practical godliness. He believed that the truth would result in other hearts, as it had resulted in his own heart, and would be honored as "the power of God unto salvation." The most profound and earnest Christians with whom he now became associated, were friends of what was called the "novel

[1] "The intelligent reader will perceive here, not only the germ of [Emmons's] theology, but the spirit of missions; the very same spirit which moved Brainerd and Hall and Mills, and a host of others, to all their laborious and self-denying exertions in behalf of the heathen." — *Dr. Ide's Memoir*, p. 94.



Digitized by Google

scheme," and he defended that scheme from the first day to the last day of his ministerial life, not merely because it was logical, not merely because it was biblical, but also because he felt that it had been, and he had faith that it would be, the instrument of the Holy Ghost in renewing and sanctifying the soul of man.

### § 4. *Approbation to preach the Gospel.*

The Records of "the South Association in Hartford County," contain the following notice of a session held at the house of the Rev. John Smalley in New Britain, on Tuesday October 3, 1769. "At this meeting Mr. Nathanael Emmons of East Haddam, desiring to be examined as a candidate to preach the gospel, was accordingly examined, found qualified, and licensed to preach the gospel, wherever God in his Providence shall call him to do the same."

This meeting was not a calm one. Rev. Edward Eells of Upper Middletown, Connecticut, a classmate at Harvard College with Rev. Timothy Symmes of East Haddam,[1] and one of the most earnest writers in the noted Wallingford controversy, was a decided opponent of Mr. Emmons's instructor; and was naturally inclined to suppose that the pupil's teeth would be set on edge, because the teacher had eaten sour grapes. Three days after the examination of the candidate, he wrote the following document for insertion in the Records of the Association:

"At a meeting of the South Association in Hartford County, convened at the house of the Rev. Mr. John Smalley in New Britain, October 3, A.D. 1769,—

"The Rev. Mr. Smalley presented Mr. Nathanael Emmons to be examined for preaching, and after his examination, he received a license from that Rev. Body, against which I found myself obliged, in faithfulness to God and his church, and in obedience to my own conscience, to enter my protest for the following reasons, which I minute down this 5th day of October, 1769.

"Mr. Emmons was asked, how God created man. He answered, After the image of God. He was asked, wherein that image of God consisted. He answered, In a right temper of heart. He was asked whether he designed to distinguish the heart or will from the understanding. He

[1] See pp. 12, 13, above.

Digitized by Google

answered, Yes. He was asked whether the Divine image was upon Adam's understanding as well as his will. He answered, No. And while this important doctrine of the Divine image on man was illustrated as it respected the whole man, understanding and will, the Rev. Mr. Smalley said, the Divine image was no more upon Adam's understanding than upon his fingers and toes.

Under the head of Adam's apostasy, Mr. Emmons said that the whole nature of Adam was depraved. He was asked what Adam lost by his apostasy. He said, A good temper of heart. It was asked, whether he meant by that the image of God. He said, Yes. He was asked whether the apostasy affected his understanding. He said, No. He was asked whether the understanding of Adam after his fall was as good, and equal to what it was in a state of innocency. He said, Yes. Then, by the help of a friend, he was brought to grant that he was not so teachable and apt to learn, under the influence of a bad heart as a good one. It was observed, that to own a universal depravity by the apostasy of Adam, and, that the understanding is not affected by the apostasy, is a contradiction; which was attempted to be reconciled by another hand. Upon which it was observed, it was not a proper time to dispute matters among ourselves.

Speaking of the great doctrine of regeneration, it was said that regeneration consisted in a new principle implanted in the soul, in which the soul is passive. It was sometimes called a new temper of heart. He was asked whether regeneration affected the understanding as well as the will. He said, No; the heart or will was only renewed by the Spirit of God. It was observed that whatsoever belonged to the rational soul, not regenerated, could not be prepared for the kingdom of God. Many things were said on this subject, besides what was said by the candidate.

Upon the subject of the soul's being passive in regeneration, and yet must attend to means antecedent to regeneration to obtain speculative knowledge, he said that, by the use of means, the conscience may be convinced that the law is just and good, and that he may have his conscience convinced of sin by the law and his exposedness to the Divine wrath; but while his conscience is convinced of these things, his heart rises up against them; and the enmity of his heart against God and his law rises in proportion to his conscience' being convinced of these things; and when he is brought to the last stage of preparatory work before regeneration, his enmity rises to the highest degree. He further added, that God did not command or require the unregenerate to use any means but with a renewed heart, a gracious principle, or love to

Digitized by Google

God. This occasioned much conversation with others, as well as with the candidate. But it issued in this, that there was no command of God to pray or do any other duty but with a perfect heart. God commands the sinner to repent, and he is to use means to convince him of sin, with a gracious principle, and so in every other duty.

Speaking of the seals of the covenant, especially of baptism when applied to adult persons, his words in his confession of faith are as follows, ——— upon which much was said. The sum of which is this, That he must give a credible evidence of inward renewing grace, and be satisfied himself, or have a prevailing hope of his good estate, or his baptism is to be deferred: — and the same qualifications are to be looked for in admitting persons into full communion. Further, he professed that only the infants of those who are in complete standing in the church, by which he meant those in full communion, are to be baptized.

When the examination was ended, each one was asked whether he could license the candidate. It was said, Yes, by almost all. And when I objected, and suggested my reasons, they appeared to have no weight with my brethren. Then I urged that they would defer the license for further consideration, for I had never known, for thirty years, of but one instance of any being licensed without the approbation of every member present, and that proved a great uneasiness amongst us. I further urged that it might be deferred for this reason: In licensing candidates, we act for the churches, and they depend upon our licensing them upon the known faith of the churches; and it is apparent upon examination, Mr. Emmons is not of the same faith, in some of the important doctrines of religion, we settled with our churches upon; and therefore we ought to consult our churches before we licensed candidates upon a different faith. But nothing I could say by way of argument and persuasion, availed any thing.

I was told, if I did not like the proceedings of the Association, I might enter my protest, with the reasons. Which was one reason of my writing as above, the first opportunity. This was signed,

EDWARD EELS.

*Middletown*, Oct. 6, 1769.

Mr. Eells was a reputable scholar, but his Protest is a sign that he moved round about in turbid waters. It is one of the landmarks by which we determine, how great a distance has been made since Nathanael Emmons became a voyager in the ship. The young candidate found theology in a different state from

Digitized by Google

that in which he left it.[1] In his simple way he thus describes the ecclesiastical storm raised by Mr. Eells:

"But when I came to be examined for preaching I met with peculiar difficulty. Several of the aged ministers were opposed to Mr. Smalley's sentiments, and of course to mine. I had a very long and critical examination upon certain disputed points; and when the question was put, whether I should be approbated to preach, several of the ministers voted against it, and one remonstrated in writing. This remonstrance occasioned a great deal of trouble, not only to me but to the Association. The points remonstrated against were agitated in the Association at several subsequent meetings; but finally it was proposed that a conciliatory creed should be formed upon the articles in question, and signed by the Association, and by myself. This proposal was adopted, and put an end to the dispute respecting my orthodoxy.

"Such a bustle, however, could not fail to make me in some measure a speckled bird. This I regretted in the time of it; but have since been disposed to think it has been of real service to me. It has made me examine my religious sentiments with more attention, and inspired me with more zeal to propagate and defend them against all opposition. I early began to pursue my studies in a methodical manner. Upon reading the Life of Dr. Doddridge, I transcribed his resolutions, and determined to follow his mode of improving the mind.[2] Though I could not be

[1] In view of the objections which he encountered when he entered the ministry, Dr. Emmons might reiterate the following stanza:

"These errors, writ on memory's ample page,
May serve as landmarks to a future age,
From which our progress we may view with pride,
Our past and present setting side by side."

[2] The following among the eighteen of Doddridge's Resolutions, were especially congenial with the tastes of young Emmons:

"1. Let my first thoughts be devout and thankful. Let me rise early, immediately return God more solemn thanks for the mercies of the night, devote myself to him, and beg his assistance in the intended business of the day.

"3. Let me set myself to read the Scriptures every morning: In the first reading let me endeavor to impress my heart with a practical sense of divine things, and then use the help of commentators; let these rules with proper alterations be observed every evening.

"4. Never let me trifle with a book, with which I have no present concern. In ap-



Digitized by Google

very methodical while I continued a candidate, yet as soon as I was settled in the ministry, I began to divide my time, and appropriate particular parts to particular duties and particular studies. This I have found by long experience, to be highly favorable to the acquisition of knowledge." — *Memoir of himself.*

Dr. Ide confirms what Dr. Emmons has here intimated, and asserts that the effect of this troublous examination was "as lasting as life" upon its victim. "It led him to reëxamine the subjects of difference between him and his opponents; disclosed to him the fact that the clergy of his own State, whom he highly venerated, differed widely among themselves; and taught him the importance, not only of being fully persuaded in his own mind, but of being able to defend himself against the attacks of men in high places. After this, he naturally felt that he must stand or fall upon his own merits; that it was unwise, as well as wicked, to place implicit reliance upon the faith of others; that there was room for improvement in theological science, and a loud call in the providence of God for a more full and consistent exhibition of the truth."

It is an interesting fact, that nearly all the promising clergymen of that day started with the conviction that theology is a progressive science. Emmons writes:

"It is a sentiment as groundless as it is discouraging, which has been often flung out, that all the subjects of divinity, all of human inquiry, are nearly exhausted, and that no great discoveries or improvements, at this time of day, are either to be expected or attempted. The present generation have superior advantages, which, with capacities no more than equal to their fathers, may enable them to surpass all who have gone before them in the paths of science."[1]

"We ought to fix it in our minds, that we are capable of improvement. Such a confidence in ourselves as this will embolden us to read with a view not only of understanding, but of improving upon the authors

plying myself to any book, let me first recollect what I may learn by it, and then beg suitable assistance from God, and let me continually endeavor to make all my studies subservient to practical religion and ministerial usefulness.

"5. Never let me lose one minute of time, nor incur unnecessary expenses, that I may have the more to spend for God." — *Orton's Life of Doddridge*, pp. 15–18.

[1] Original Edition of Collected Works, Vol. II. p. 53.

Digitized by Google

we read. Very few authors have exhausted the subjects upon which they have treated, and therefore [they] have generally left us ample room to improve upon what others have written."[1]

### § 5. *Mr. Emmons as a candidate.*

"I continued a candidate from October, 1769, to April, 1773, when I was ordained to the pastoral care of the second church in Wrentham [now Franklin], Massachusetts."—*Memoir of himself.*

Thus Emmons had attained the good age of twenty-four years and five months, before he began to be a candidate, and he then waited before his ordination three years and seven months. It is easy to see why he waited so long. He was unconscious of his own greatness, and as he speaks of his having sustained "a pretty fair moral character," so he never dreamed of acquiring any thing more than a pretty fair ministerial character. He sought a retired and obscure place of settlement, and wandered first among the then feeble churches in the central and western parts of the State of New York, and in the northern part of New Hampshire. How many invitations to the pastorate of these churches were extended to him we do not know;[2] but wherever

[1] Original Edition of Collected Works, Vol. II. p. 38.

[2] In the Church Records of Campton, New Hampshire, a township, the early proprietors of which were emigrants from Connecticut, and from Newburyport, Massachusetts, — one of the most energetic proprietors being a brother of William Bartlett, a founder of Andover Theological Seminary — are the following votes:

"CAMPTON, Sept. 23d, 1771.

"Voted, Whereas, Mr. Nathanael Emmons has for some time past dispensed the word of God in this place, to the general satisfaction of the Proprietors and Inhabitants of this Township, therefore it is the desire of this Proprietee, that the said Mr. Nathanael Emmons should settle to preach the gospel in this place.

"Voted, That a committee be appointed or chosen to wait on Mr. Nathanael Emmons, to see if he inclines to settle in this place, provided he can have reasonable settlement and support.

"Voted, To raise a tax, to be paid forthwith, of seven shillings on each Original Right; and those settlers that are not proprietors to pay a tax of three shillings and sixpence upon their interest where they have no more than half a right; and, where they own more than half a right, to pay in proportion to their interest towards paying Mr. Nathanael Emmons for his past preaching and support; and the remainder, if any there be, to go towards further supporting the Gospel.

"Recorded and Examined.

"Attest: SAMUEL EMERSON,
"Proprietors' Clerk."

Digitized by Google

he went, he suspected that either the people were unsuited to him or he was unsuited to them. At the close of many a Sabbath, he might have written the words of his townsman, Brainerd: "In the evening, I could hardly look anybody in the face, because of the imperfections I saw in my performances in the day past."[1] He was depressed because he found so many who did not sympathize with his didactic tendencies, and so few with whose rhetorical tastes he could persuade himself to comply. Naturally distrustful of his aptness to persuade men, with his weak, small voice, and his student-like demeanor, he became more and more diffident. His low opinion of his qualifications for the pulpit prevented him from doing justice to them. And withal, settlement or no settlement, he *would* preach the truths of Calvinism, distasteful as he knew they were to the majority of men. As he was at last, so he was at first, a doctrinal preacher, and in order to be prized at his true worth, he must either *find*, or else *form* an *educated* people. He could not ingratiate himself at once into the affections of an undiscerning parish, and it was a long time before he discovered a vacant Church interested in religious discussion, and inquisitive to learn "what is truth." Between his twenty-fifth and his twenty-eighth year, he saw more of human life in all its varied phases, than he ever saw before or since. Had it not been for these three years of travel, he would have failed to gain many rich experiences of the world. They were indeed years of affliction to him, for he abhorred more than is meet, a roving life; still he learned from them such lessons of humility as qualified him to become, for seventy years, an exemplar of the Christian virtues to a parish of solid, sensible men.

[1] Pres. Edwards's Works, Vol. X. p. 192, also p 118.

Digitized by Google

# CHAPTER III.

## THE TOWNSHIP OF FRANKLIN, AND ITS RECEPTION OF THE NEW PASTOR.

### § 1. *Its Religious History and Character.*

We have a natural curiosity to learn something of the parish over which the young metaphysician was ordained. It was a parish of farmers, and is about twenty-seven miles south-west of Boston, Mass., about twenty miles north-west of Providence, R. I., within fifteen miles of the birth-place of President Napthali Daggett, President Jonathan Maxcy, Judge David Daggett, Fisher Ames; about twenty miles from the home of Samuel, John, and John Quincy Adams. It has been, emphatically a Puritan parish. It has a religious origin and religious annals. For many years it remained a part of Dedham, which was "the sixteenth or eighteenth settlement from the first beginning of the country."[1] When the inhabitants of Dedham first organized themselves into a township in the year 1638, they entered into a "covenant of association," beginning thus:

"1. We whose names are hereunto subscribed, do, in the fear and reverence of our Almighty God, mutually and severally promise amongst ourselves, and each to other, to profess and practise one faith, according to that most perfect rule, the foundation whereof is everlasting love. 2. That we shall by all means labor to keep off from us all such as are contrary minded, and receive only such unto us, as be such as may probably be of one heart with us," etc., etc.

This Town Covenant, containing five articles, was subscribed by

[1] Dexter's Century Sermon, preached at Dedham, 1738, p. 45. See also, Dr. Lamson's Three Historical Discourses, pp. 6, 7.



Digitized by Google

one hundred and twenty-six persons, and it breathes a more religious spirit than is to be found in a majority of the very best political constitutions.

In 1661, March 27, a part of Dedham was constituted a distinct parish, and in 1673, Oct. 15, this parish, with the same pious intent, became a distinct township, called Wrentham. The inhabitants of the town were scattered, their houses having been burned, in King Philip's war; and after the war they signed a document beginning thus:

"We the subscribers—having formerly had our residence in Wrentham, but by those sad and solemn dispensations of God's providence were removed: Yet desiring that a work for the honor of God and the good and comfort of ourselves and ours might be again engaged in, and promoted at that place: therefore our purpose is to return thither, God willing," &c.[1]

In the Town Records of Wrentham are the following notices of the fact, that, before as well as during Emmons's pastoral life, the *minister* of the town was the chief *man* in it:

"1676, March y^e 30th y^e Inhabitance ware drawn of by rason of y^e Endien Worre.

"1680, August y^e 21st. The Rev^t. M^r. Man returned to Wrentham again and divers inhab^nts."

In 1737, Dec. 23, a part of Wrentham was formed into a distinct Parish, of which Dr. Emmons afterwards became the third minister. The Church Records of this "Second Precinct" [afterwards called Franklin], inform us:

"The 16th day of February, 1738, was kept as a day of solemn fasting and prayer in the 2d Precinct in Wrentham, to implore the blessing of God and his direction in the settling of a Church, and in order to the calling and settling of a gospel minister in said place. Then, in a large assembly, the covenant was read; and the Rev. Mr. Baxter, who assisted in that affair as moderator, desired the brethren to signify their consent

[1] A Sermon delivered at Wrentham, Oct. 26, 1773, on completing the first century since the town was incorporated. By Joseph Bean, A. M., Pastor of the First Church in said town, p. 15.

Digitized by Google

to it by lifting up the hand, which they accordingly did. He then declared them to be a Church of our Lord Jesus Christ."

The Church Covenant here named is by no means equal in point of doctrinal distinctness, to the covenant of the Church in East Haddam already alluded to.[1] Dr. Emmons was never satisfied with it, but as he always retained a constitutional love for "things of the olden time," and would never sacrifice his conservatism except at the stern demand of what he deemed the truth, he never made an attempt to exchange the indefinite covenant for a more distinctive creed. It is a significant fact that, for nearly seventy years, he remained a member, and for fifty-four years, the President and *Ruling* Elder of a Church, which had no more explicit avowal of doctrine than the following words:

"3. And whereas there are different apprehensions in the minds of great and wise men, even in the doctrinals of religion, we do declare our consent to the *New England Confession of Faith*, apprehending, in our judgment and conscience, that it is agreeable to the Holy Scriptures."

But although the Franklin Church conformed to the usage of the times in the indefiniteness of its creed, it was in advance of the times in regard to an intelligent orthodoxy. For, says Rev. Mr. Bean, "let it be observed, that it hath never been the practice of the Churches in Wrentham to baptize any children, but those whose parents, one or both, are in full communion."[2]

The conscientious fidelity of this Church is seen in the fact, that on the first day of its formation, it "chose a committee of the brethren, to ask the advice of the three neighboring ministers, who were present at the gathering of this Church, relating to the ministerial accomplishments of Mr. Elias Haven; [a native of Dedham], who had for a considerable time preached in this Precinct; who were pleased to signify to said committee their approbation of Mr. Haven, as one in some good measure qualified for the gospel ministry."

On the 24th of February, eight days afterwards, this careful Church, "in order for their fuller satisfaction as to the qualifications of Mr. Elias Haven for the Gospel ministry and suitableness

[1] See pp. 16, 17, above. [2] Century Sermon, p. 23.

Digitized by Google

for this place, by their moderator examined him as to his principles both of doctrine and discipline."

Having passed a satisfactory examination before the Moderator of the Church, Brother Robert Pond,—Mr. Haven was called by the Church to be its Pastor, and was ordained by an Ecclesiastical Council, in the open air, November 8, 1738. On the 8th day of the following February it was

"Voted at a Church meeting to choose two Ruling Elders, to join with the Pastor of this Church, in those acts of Spiritual rule, which are distinct from the ministry of the Word and Sacraments committed unto him."

This vote might seem to be an evil omen for Nathanael Emmons. On March 8th, 1739, the two elders were chosen, and after an adjournment "for a quarter of an hour," two deacons were elected. We subsequently find the following records:

"June 9, 1742. At a Church meeting at the public meeting House,

"Voted, to proceed in convenient time, to have our Ruling Elders (who have sometime since been chosen) ordained.

"Voted, to proceed in convenient time, to have our Deacons (who have also sometime since been chosen) ordained.

"Voted, to send for two Churches, to assist in the ordination of these Officers, by their Elders and other Delegates.

"Voted, to send for the New-North Church of Christ in Boston, and for the Church of Christ in Hopkinton to assist us in this affair.

"Voted, that this Ordination be on the 2d Wednesday in September next."

Here and there we read of these ordained elders signing a letter of dismission from the Second Church in Wrentham to other churches, or a letter of admonition to delinquent members; but in the main they performed the same duties which are now devolved on our church committees. Fourteen years after their appointment, we find the last intimation concerning their usefulness, in the following vote, which had been considered several months before it was passed:

"November 14, 1753. The Church met according to appointment; and, the meeting being opened with prayer, the affair on which the meeting was appointed was proposed, and discoursed of, a considerable

Digitized by Google

time, and the following vote was called, viz.: Brethren, if you think it the duty of this Church, in its present circumstances, to proceed to the choice of another Ruling Elder, please to signify it by holding up the hand; and it passed in the negative.

"N. B. Present 38 brethren, and but 14 hands up."

It is an interesting fact, that Mr. Haven, the first minister of this thoughtful church, was a college classmate with Rev. Timothy Symmes, the minister of the Emmons family at East Haddam, and also with Rev. Edward Eells, the author of the Protest against the "approbation" of Emmons as a preacher.[1] Mr. Haven was an exemplary man. In the great revival of 1741, he labored with incessant activity. Associated with Rev. Mr. Messinger of the Wrentham First Parish, he wrote thus in the "Christian History:"

"August 12, 1743. The people in this town (so far as we can learn, or have had opportunity to observe), have generally been externally sober and honest; have kept up a great deal of external religion, especially in their families, and the house of God; so that the generations that have risen up from time to time have generally been instructed, from their very early youth, in the first principles of our holy religion. But alas!" etc.

"The first open and public manifestation of the Lord's return to us by the power of his grace, was on the 26th of February, 1740–1."

"The powerful awakenings and convictions on persons' minds spread from neighborhood to neighborhood, so that by mid-summer there were instances, in all parts of the town, under great concern to know what they should do to be saved. Yea, it appeared to us, as far as we could observe in our respective parishes, that very few houses, if any, in the town, were passed by and left without some observable spiritual concern on some or other of the family."

During the intermission of public worship on the Sabbath, "it became a common thing for" the people, "to retire in small companies, to different places for religious conferences or reading, and more lately, there are several societies that spend part of the intermission in praying, reading and singing together. So that, on many accounts the intermission, as well as time of public exercises of God's worship, is very remarkably holy to the Lord, esteemed honorable, and a great delight

[1] See pp. 38–40.



Digitized by Google

unto the more serious among us. And even the time of travel to and from our places of public worship, has often been sweetly redeemed for pious discourse between two or three, as they walk in company together.

"We are satisfied that the general concern upon people's minds which prevailed among us above two years ago, and has not ceased, did not arise from a disposition to conform to the prevailing custom of people around us: for this was the first town which was so remarkably visited and blessed by sovereign grace within many miles: and it evidently appeared that many would be under the same concern at the same time, and would be agreeably surprised when they unexpectedly found one another uttering the same complaints relating to the state of their own souls."

Within a few years after his ordination, Mr. Haven was attacked with a disease of the lungs, "to the no small affliction of his parishioners, who were thereby deprived of his excellent sermons and other performances, which they were very passionately fond of." He died August 10, 1754, after having received kindnesses unusually liberal at that day, from his "ministerial" parish.

On the 10th of June, 1760, Mr. Caleb Barnum was ordained his successor. Rev. Samuel Hopkins Emery, in his work on the "Ministry of Taunton," devotes about thirty pages to the history of Mr. Barnum, who became the seventh pastor of Taunton, after he retired from his pastorate in Franklin. He was characterized by an independent, fearless, resolute mind, which led him at one time, into a severe contest with his Taunton parishioner, the celebrated Robert Treat Paine, in regard to the baptism of Judge Paine's children. When the tidings of the battle of Lexington reached his parish, Mr. Barnum preached an eloquent discourse in allusion to the event, and roused his hearers to a patriotic interest in the freedom of their country. On the 10th of February, 1776, he acted in sympathy with the words of his sermon, and joined the army, as chaplain to the 24th Regiment, then stationed near Boston. When that city was evacuated, he "accompanied his regiment to New York, thence to Montreal." In the disastrous retreat from Canada, "he endured great hardships with exemplary Christian fortitude." At Ticonderoga he was attacked

Digitized by Google

with a bilious disorder which incapacitated him for the duties of his office. On the 2d of August, 1776, he reached Pittsfield, Massachusetts, where he died on the 23d of that month. On his death-bed he remarked: "I have no doubts concerning the justice and goodness of that cause [the cause of our National Independence], and had I a thousand lives, they should all be willingly laid down in it." His death, says Rev. Thomas Allen, the minister of Pittsfield, who preached Mr. Barnum's funeral sermon, was marked by "such sweetness of temper, such tranquillity of spirit, such serenity and peace in the near view of death and eternity, such patience under pain, and entire submission to God's disposing will," as "manifested at once the power of those supports which he enjoyed, and the excellence of the Christian religion."[1]

The ministry of this brave man at Franklin, however, was not a placid one. Dr. Elam Smalley writes:

"Though Mr. Barnum was a man of very pleasing address, popular as a public speaker, of very respectable talents and attainments, and throughout demeaned himself so that nothing could be substantiated against his moral, or Christian, or ministerial character, yet there were some who could not be satisfied with him. These were the occasion of great trouble to the church and pastor. The church seemed to bear and forbear to the farthest limit of Christian courtesy and ecclesiastical lenity; still the divisions and contentions were not healed. Neighboring churches, by their pastors and delegates, came and went, and went and came, and prayed and advised; but the difficulties continued. In this state of things the special influences of the Spirit seem to have been withheld, and the ways of Zion mourned."[2]

Mr. Barnum was dismissed from the Franklin church on the 6th of March, 1768; and, during a wearisome interval of five years, the church called to their pastorate first, Mr. Elijah Fitch, a man who is described by a neighboring minister,[3] "as in

[1] Emery's Ministry of Taunton, Vol. II. pp. 1-29.

[2] Centennial Sermon, delivered before the Church and Congregation in Franklin, Massachusetts, February 25, 1838. By E. Smalley, Pastor of the Church, pp. 19, 20. Mr. Bean, in his Century Sermon, p. 21, speaks of Mr. Barnum as having "carried on the work of the Lord there, faithfully performing the work of the ministry."

[3] Centennial Sermon of Rev. Mr. Howe of Hopkinton. Mr. Fitch was the author

Digitized by Google

the pulpit remarkably eloquent," and "a man of great powers of mind;" secondly, the church called Mr. Nathan Perkins, well known now as Rev. Dr. Perkins of West Hartford, Connecticut. Both of these candidates recoiled from the guardianship of a people some of whom were so scrupulous, others so contentious, many of them so intelligent, and all so earnest.[1]

### § 2. *Emmons's Entrance upon his Pastorate.*

At length this Puritan Church invited Nathanael Emmons to preach as a candidate. He knew that in some respects they differed from him, and in other respects they were unprepared to welcome any one. Timorous, therefore, and self-distrustful, he took his long journey to Wrentham, confiding in Providence by day, and comforted by a dream at night.[2] On the Church Records are the following votes.

"May 17, 1772. The Church stayed, and voted to spend some time in prayer to Almighty God, for direction, and his blessing on their endeavors for the resettling a Gospel minister, and for the out pouring of the Spirit, and Revival of Religion among us. Voted to meet on the next Sacramental Lecture, at nine o'clock in the morning for the purpose above mentioned.

"Nov. 20, 1772. The Church stayed after Lecture and appointed a Church meeting, to be atttended at the publick Meeting House, on Monday the 30th instant, at ten o'clock in the morning, to see if the Church are ready to proceed to the choice of a minister, to be the Pastor of this Church, and to proceed accordingly, or to do any thing relative thereto.

"At a meeting of the 2d Church of Christ in Wrentham, assembled at

of a poem in blank verse, entitled, "The Beauties of Religion." He died pastor at Hopkinton, Massachusetts, in 1788, aged 42. He was graduated at Yale two years before Dr. Emmons.

[1] A little incident in Mr. Barnum's ministry illustrates the intense theological spirit of the parish. One of his opposers, a young man, was seen taking notes of Barnum's sermons. The pastor, unaccustomed to such methods of attending to his sermons, met the young man and accosted him thus: "Do you write down my sermons as I deliver them?" "Yes, Sir." "Do you write down every word?" "Yes, Sir, I write down all that you say, and now and then add a little to make out good sense." It is easy to see that such a people might have been prepared to appreciate such a man as Mr. Emmons.

[2] See pp. 22, 23.

Digitized by Google

the publick meeting House in the 2d Presinct in said Town, on Monday the 30th of November, A. D. 1772, the meeting being opened with solemn prayer, the Church proceeded in the following manner, viz:

"The Question being put, whether the Church were then ready to proceed to the choice of a (learned Protestant) minister, to be the Pastor of this Church and people, the vote passed in the affirmative.

"Then the Moderator called for paper votes, and it appeared that Mr. Nathanael Emmons was chosen, 34 members being present; 32 voted.

"Voted, that a copy of these votes be presented to Mr. Emmons, with the Church's desire of his acceptance of their choice, provided the Presinct shall concur with them in the same choice, and make such proposals, or grant such sum or sums of money for his support, as shall be suitable encouragement for his settling in the work of the ministry among us."

Although in many respects the Franklin Parish was admirably fitted to the needs of the inquisitive young candidate, yet he saw evil omens in the contentious mind which had been exhibited by the reasoning farmers. He once thought of preaching to them a sermon on one word of 2 Timothy 3: 4, — the word "Heady," — "that word" he said "describes them to a charm." He was a cautious man. He hesitated ten weeks, —they waited patiently for him ten weeks, — and at length he returned the following answer to the preceding call:

"*To the Church and Congregation in the 2d Precinct of Wrentham.*

"BRETHREN AND FRIENDS, — Since you have been pleased to invite me to labor among you in Word and Doctrine, I have taken the matter into serious and deliberate consideration, as the weight and importance of it justly requires; and, after seeking divine light and direction, and viewing the case on every side, as well as I am able, it appears to me, that I am called of God in his providence to accept your invitation. Accordingly, I do hereby manifest my acceptance of the Call you have given me, to settle with you, in the work of the Gospel ministry, — earnestly entreating that He who hath disposed your hearts to give, and mine to accept the call to the sacred office, would smile propitiously on our future proceedings, and make them happily subservient to his own glory, the cause of Christ, and the best good of your souls and mine.

"NATHANAEL EMMONS.

"WRENTHAM, 2d Precinct, Feb. 13, 1773."



Digitized by Google

Among the earliest records which Mr. Emmons wrote in the Church Books were the following:[1]

"A. D. 1773, April 21. This day the ordaining Council, together with the Church in this place, met at the house appointed.

"Then I (Nathanael Emmons) producing a Letter of Dismission and Recommendation from the 2d Church in East Haddam, was received into communion with this Church.

"Then, near the public Meeting House in this place[2] the Church renewedly manifested their desire that I should be ordained their Pastor, to which I consented, in the presence of the Council; and accordingly was set apart to the sacred work of the Gospel ministry.

"The Rev'd Mr. Hopkins, Pastor of the 1st Congregational Church in Newport, began the Solemnity with Prayer. — The Rev'd Mr. Hart, Pastor of a Church in Preston, preacht the Sermon. — The Rev'd Mr. Haven, Pastor of the Church in Dedham, made the prayer after the Sermon. — The Rev'd Mr. Thatcher, Pastor of the 2d Church in Attlebrough, gave the Charge. — The Rev'd Mr. Frost, Pastor of the 2d Church in Mendon, made the prayer after it. — And the Rev'd Mr. Bean, Pastor of the 1st Church in this town, gave the Right hand of Fellowship.

"May 5, 1773. After public Lecture, the Church was stayed, and informed what was expended in providing for the Ordination Council,

[1] The first printed communication which we have ever seen from the pen of Dr. Emmons, is a brief statistical record prepared for Rev. Mr. Bean's Century Sermon in 1774. In that record he states that "Twenty-four members [were] at first [in 1738] embodied into a Church state [in the Second Parish of Wrentham]; fifty-three [have been since] received from *other* Churches; one hundred and eighty-six [have been] received *here:* which makes, in the whole, admitted since Mr. Haven's ordination [a period of thirty-five years] two hundred and sixty-three, including the twenty-four first formed into a Church. Six hundred and eighty-one have been baptized since Mr. Haven's ordination, including a few adults."

[2] "At the time Dr. Emmons was ordained, there was a forest within twenty rods of the Church. His ordination took place in the open air; he stood in a kind of valley, and the people stood on the elevated ground above him. In allusion to this circumstance, he pleasantly remarked that he was ordained *under* his people, not *over* them." Barber's Historical Collections of Mass. p. 470. — The multitudes who thronged at an ordination service a century ago in Franklin, rendered it impossible to meet in a Church edifice. The day on which Emmons was inducted into the pastoral office was remarkable for its warmth and beauty. The apple trees were in full blossom. Being the day after the anniversary of his birth, it was peculiarly interesting to the young pastor.

Digitized by Google

which was £10. 13. 4. Whereupon they voted that the charge should be paid out of the Church Treasury.

"At the desire of Brother James Metcalf, to have a person chosen to assist him in tuning the psalm; the Church chose Brother Ebenezer Dean to tune the psalm with Br. Metcalf."

Speaking, in his old age, of this ordination, Dr. Emmons remarked: "When I was about to be settled in Franklin, some of the neighboring ministers had the impression that I had embraced some heresies. So when they came to examine me for ordination, they tried to draw out my heresies. I answered all their questions promptly; *but if they had only known how*, they would have made me a heretic and never ordained me." Two members of the Council, Dr. Hopkins and Dr. Hart (the son-in-law of Dr. Bellamy) were especial friends of Emmons at that early day. Dr. West of Stockbridge, another of his friends, was invited, but was unable to take part in the ordination. The other members of the Council were the moderate Calvinists of those times, who recoiled from some of the teachings of Bellamy, Hart, and West.

Dr. Emmons always regarded the history of his settlement in Franklin, as a commentary on the best method of quieting a turbulent parish. After a tedious decade of dissension, sometimes about the use of Watts's new Hymn Book, at other times about the most decorous method of tuning the Psalms, then about certain rules of Church discipline, again and above all, on the question whether "*the doctrines of universal redemption and assurance of faith*" are consistent "with the other doctrines of grace" and "*the essential analogy of faith*," or "dangerous and destructive to the souls of men," — the people became at once harmonious in tuning the songs of Zion; and the voice of discord was hushed, not to be raised again for ninety years, perhaps not for nine times ninety. This is the influence of a prudent minister. And the prudence of this minister consisted in aiming to appease his alienated hearers by preaching the doctrines of the Bible; in aiming to exalt religion by preaching the doctrines *well;* in aiming to educate the mind, heart and taste of his people, not by lyceum lectures, but by preaching the doctrines, proving them, applying them in a plain and simple way.

Digitized by Google

Two of Emmons's favorite proverbs were: "The way to keep a Church peaceable is, to keep them interested in the great truths of the Bible:" "Men can do nothing more effectual to guard their people against corrupters, than to teach them plainly the principal doctrines of Christianity."

It is also a noteworthy fact, that the Franklin Parish owes its fame to the sermons which have been written in it. Throughout the neighboring towns, when a stranger inquired for the road to Franklin, he was answered, "That road will take you to Dr. Emmons's," as if the parsonage were the only attraction to the place. About a half century ago, one reason urged for opening a regular communication between Franklin and the main road from Providence to Boston, was the fact that so many travellers came to visit Dr. Emmons and his pupils. Theology was dominant in those times.

Digitized by Google

# CHAPTER IV.

## THE STUDIES AND THE BOOKS OF EMMONS.

### § 1. *Little care for his secular concerns.*

THE preceding sections prepare us to detect the full meaning of the modest youth, when he writes:

"I entered on the ministerial work with a great deal of diffidence in my abilities to perform it, on account of the difficulties which I expected to encounter. Several things concurred to awaken this apprehension. Though I had a large portion of pride, yet it served to produce timidity rather than confidence. I was conscious of many and great defects, which depressed my mind, and rendered me incapable of exercising those talents I possessed, to the best advantage. I was destitute of an easy address, of a strong voice, of a good style, and of a graceful delivery. Despairing of being a popular, I was solicitous only to become an instructive preacher. With this view, I determined to give myself wholly to the ministry, and use every proper exertion to acquire a thorough knowledge of divinity in general, and of that scheme of sentiments which I had adopted in particular. My zeal with respect to this object, had been awakened, and increased by a series of circumstances prior to my settlement in the ministry." — *Memoir of himself.*

Again he writes: "*As soon as I entered,*" — he needed not one hour for congratulations, but "as soon as I entered into the ministry, I resolved to devote my whole time to the sacred work, without encumbering myself with the cares and concerns of the world. I expected, however, that I should need great firmness and vigilance, to guard me against the solicitations of ease, interest, and seeming necessity, to neglect the proper business of my calling. Upon this consideration, I determined not to be-



Digitized by Google

gin to do the least manual labor, nor even superintend my secular concerns; but to make my study my home, and my ministerial duties my whole employment. Soon after my ordination, I was invited by one of my parishioners to spend several weeks at his house, upon free cost; but I declined the offer, for fear my acceptance would obstruct my studies; and this refusal, I apprehend, prevented other invitations of the same kind.

"After I had been settled about a year, I employed some of my friends to purchase me a house and farm. The house needed repair, and I employed certain persons to repair it, and others to superintend the business; so that scarcely a man in the parish had less concern with it than I had." — *Memoir of himself.*

"Although he boarded" at this time, says Dr. Ide, "within sight of his own house, and frequently passed it while under repair, he never allowed himself to see its interior, until it was finished. This fact, which was told by himself to several of his friends, a short time before his decease, whether it be considered indicative of wisdom or the want of it, certainly evinces one thing; and that is, a determination of no ordinary character, to keep himself free from the entanglements of the world."[1] Such facts as these develop the emphasis of Emmons, when he so often charges his pupils to give themselves *wholly* to their office.

"The next year" [1774, continues Dr. Emmons], "I entered into a family state, in which a great many worldly affairs invited my attention; but I kept my resolution, and confined myself wholly to my study, without doing so much as an hour's labor in the garden, or in the field. It was a time of war; when laborers were scarce and dear, and when many ministers supposed that the circumstances of the times justified them in neglecting their studies, for the purpose of laboring to support their families. Though they might have thought this to be *their* duty, yet I could never make myself believe that it was *mine*. Hence I felt constrained to separate myself from all secular concerns, and devote myself wholly to my ministerial work." — *Memoir of himself.*

Many efforts were made to bring this indefatigable student back again into what he calls "*the world.*" Sitting in a circle

[1] Memoir of Emmons, p. 57.

Digitized by Google

of friends, one of them, a clergyman, said to Mr. Emmons: "In the cold season I write my sermons for the whole year, and *keep* them for the warm season, in order that I may, then, labor on my farm, and yet supply my pulpit." "That is a wise plan," exclaimed one of the circle, "and Mr. Emmons, you are straitened for the means of support, why then do you not write sermons in this way and *keep* them?" "*My* sermons will not *keep* so long," responded the impervious divine—"I have put my foot down; I shall study," was his watchword, and at length the agricultural clergy gave him up.

It is told of him that walking over his farm one day, he saw the bars of his fence down. His first impulse was to put them up, and thus save his fields from the depredation of cattle. But no: "If I say A, I must say B; and it is safer not to begin the alphabet." With this favorite maxim on his mind, he left the bars down, and went into his study.

Dr. Ide says of him, that he "merely exercised such a superintendence of his concerns as was unavoidable, and which he could do, without any interruption to his studies, or parochial labors. He would never allow those in his employ to depend upon his assistance in their work, in any emergency whatever. If they laid out more than they could do, or failed to prepare themselves for emergencies which might occur, and by this miscalculation or neglect got themselves into difficulty, they were taught never to expect relief from any personal exertions of his. Though he sometimes walked out among his laborers, and for his own recreation took hold of their tools, and wrought with them for a few moments, yet he would sooner see the waste or ruin of his crops, than have it understood that he might be called off from his studies, to assist in the labors of his farm. The inflexibility of his purpose on this subject, may be seen from such facts as the following.

"At a time when a large quantity of his hay lay exposed in the field, his men were suddenly alarmed at the prospect of rain. They at once concluded that they could not secure it, unless they had assistance, and it was now too late to go abroad for help. Though they knew that in ordinary circumstances it would be in vain to expect any aid from him, yet as there was now so much at stake, and the loss to be sustained entirely his

Digitized by Google

own, they thought it possible that he would so far relax from the rigidity of his habits, as to assist one of them in throwing off a load of hay in the barn, while the other should get that in the field in readiness to carry in. Accordingly, one of them went to the doctor's study, and told him that a shower was rapidly approaching, and that the hay must be wet unless he would give them aid in throwing off a load in the barn. 'Then let it be wet,' said he; 'I am not going to leave my work to do yours.'

"Those who knew his accommodating spirit, his readiness always to gratify the feelings of others, so far as he could consistently with his duty, and his daily habit of assisting the needy, will see in this, not the recklessness or unkindness which the apparently harsh expression might indicate to a stranger, but that strong guard against every temptation to turn aside from his appropriate work, for which he was so remarkable."[1]

In his devotion to study, Dr. Emmons was a representative of the old Massachusetts and Connecticut divines. We read of the two Edwardses, Hopkins, Smalley, Stiles, Chauncy and Dwight, as at their books, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, and sometimes eighteen hours of the day. In this respect, the Franklin divine equalled any of them. He had his study, not like Bishop Berkley, in his cellar, but on his lower floor, so that his family might easily preserve a comfortable temperature in his room, if he should ever be called out. "By this means," he said, "I have saved much time." Many of the old divines left their domestic concerns to others, and intermeddled not with the minor cares of life. Neither President Edwards nor Dr. Emmons understood very well, the topography of their barns. The former could not distinguish his own domestic animals from those of his neighbor. The latter rode home from Boston, after the State election, without noticing that he was carried by another man's horse. "If I had heard," said one of his intimate friends, "that he had broken into a bookstore, and brought home its contents, I might have thought it probable; but as to this unministerial kind of theft, I *cannot* believe it."

[1] Dr. Ide's Memoir, pp. 58, 59.

Digitized by Google

§ 2. *His Taste and Talent for Business.*

It has been imagined that Emmons abstained from manual labor partly on account of a distaste for it. But when he says "I never loved labor,"[1] he means that he never loved agriculture as the employment of his life, and that he preferred study as his chief occupation. "*In itself considered*," he was fond of the business of his ancestors.

"It was not," writes Dr. Ide,[2] "the mere loss of time which he regarded, in his total abstinence from all secular labor. He feared its influence upon his mind and habits of study. An intimate friend of his, and a brother in the ministry, once said to him, when conversing upon his habit of refraining from the usual modes of exercise which people adopt, 'I should think, Doctor, that you would find it pleasant to labor in your garden an hour or two a day, and that this exercise would contribute to your health and mental vigor.' 'Too pleasant, I fear,' said he; 'if I were to labor an hour a day in the garden, or long enough to become interested in it, I should have my garden in my study all the rest of the day.'"

It has been also imagined that Dr. Emmons was unskilful in the management of his estate. Exactly the reverse was true. The hints which he gave to the superintendents of his fields were prized by the farmers as oracles of sound judgment and cultivated taste. His workmen well understood that he had a quick eye for the fitness of their work; an unusual fondness for a neat lawn, solid walls, comfortable barns, fair cattle. Whether he could always identify them or not, he *would* have a horse and chaise worthy of being called "the minister's." Such was the impulse given to the laborers on his land, by his few words of advice, and such was the sagacity of his comprehensive directions, that although his farm was large, containing one hundred and twenty-nine acres, and although it was in a poor condition when he bought it, still, during the greater part of his life it was noted as the best farm in the parish. After all his abstractions he never lost entirely the tastes or the skill of his boyhood. He was

[1] See p. 25, above. [2] Memoir, p. 59.



Digitized by Google

then admired for his athletic feats and cunning in the use of farmers' tools. True, it was often said to him by his father and uncles whom he interrupted in their field labors: "Nat! you ask more questions than you plant seeds;" "You pry into learning more than you dig into the earth;" but these rebukes were signs not that he failed to work well, but that he was more intent on learning than farming. He was especially expert with the sickle, and went ahead of all competitors on the field of rye. Once a year in his ministerial life, he allowed the passion of his boyhood to triumph, for a few hours, over the stern rules of his manhood, and when the time came for reaping his grain he would challenge some one of his students, or of his workmen to overtake him on the field. Several of the neighbors would sometimes hear of the approaching trial, and come to witness it. Hand over hand, the brisk theologian would cut through the grain, and leave his competitors far behind. But at length on a certain day (it must have been after he had seen the new moon over his left shoulder),[1] a stout and agile student in divinity outstripped him in the course, and the discomfited theologian, covered with perspiration, his ruddy face now redder than ever, put the sickle on his shoulder, walked with his hasty step straight to his study, and never was seen again on the reaping field. He was not a man to be beaten more than once, in the same *place* and the same *way*.

It was a self-denial for him to forego entirely the free labor of the farm. Accordingly, says Dr. Ide, it was "*while able to preach and actively engaged in the ministry*" that "he would subject himself to no kind of secular labor, not even to harness his horse, or feed his cattle, or bring in his wood. He depended upon his hired men, or his children, to see that all these things were done for him. After he had closed the active duties of the ministry," however, "and no longer felt himself under obligation to give his time and attention to this work, he would often wait upon himself and others, very pleasantly observing, 'I have nothing else now to do.'"[2] He wrote in the albums of his friends, and showed his natural versatility by abandoning many old habits which in his hale manhood he would not deign to relinquish, "no, not for King George."

[1] See p. 6, above.

[2] Dr. Ide's Memoir, p. 59.

Digitized by Google

### § 3. *His Pecuniary Necessities.*

If Emmons had chosen to devote a portion of his time to the care of his farm, he would not have been censured. His pecuniary needs give a peculiar significance to his absorption in study. His salary was meagre.[1] His family was somewhat expensive. He was obliged and was content to practise a strict economy through life. His daughters, like those of President Edwards, contributed to his financial relief by their household arts. The first straw bonnet ever braided in Franklin (the town which is now conspicuous for its bonnet manufacture), was braided in his house. When he was released from his pastoral care, he received from his parish an annual grant of one hundred and fifty dollars. He was asked, "How can you support yourself on this inconsiderable stipend?" "First," he replied, "I shall eat up my wood [his farm contained some merchantable timber]; next, I shall eat up my land." But he felt no concern for the future, even if he should be compelled to sell his farm to supply his table. "I have always been nourished by underground streams," was his favorite saying in allusion to the economical arts of his household. "I can still trust in the secret will of God." Having labored in the active pastorate fifty-four years; having published more than a hundred sermons, and instructed about a hundred young men for professional life; having early purchased a farm which through the seventy years of his ownership rose in value, and thus made money for him in the nighttime; having possessed many advantages for accumulating a fortune, he left at his death, an estate which, had it been sold at once, would not have yielded to his family twenty-five hundred dollars, and his entire property never amounted to more than three thousand dollars.[2]

His own remark is: "No men have been called to make

[1] See Ch. VIII. § 1.

[2] Ten years after his decease, when the railroad passing through Franklin, had augmented the value of his farm, it of course commanded a higher price than would have been given while he lived. During the fifty-eight years from his approbation to preach until his resignation of his pulpit, he earned about forty-four dollars *per annum* more than his expenses. This is the pecuniary reward of theological study.

Digitized by Google

greater sacrifices of their worldly interests, than the ministers of the gospel." The remark is true; still his own contented life shows, that ministers have some compensation in this world. With their modest income and moderate wants and frugal habits, and exemption from hazardous speculation,[1] they often enjoy more than is given to the more adventurous layman. One would have predicted, that the pecuniary condition of Governor Treadwell, the classmate of Emmons, would be more enviable than that of Emmons himself. But while the Franklin minister began life in poverty, and ended it with a tolerable competence, his classmate commenced his career in affluence, and closed it with such words as these: "The prospect is, that my sun will set in a cloud; my burden is bound with cords upon me so that I cannot break them; I cannot turn to the right hand or to the left." He was afflicted in various forms, and was

> "Like Cato firm, like Aristides just,
> Like rigid Cincinnatus, *nobly poor*."[2]

## § 4. *Extent of his Reading.*

The Franklin pastor's absorption in study was indeed excessive; "so impossible it is to stop a soul in the full speed thereof;" but the *main* influence of it was good. His example stood out as a lesson to the men who were "hewers of wood and drawers of water" and also preachers of the gospel; and it reclaimed many a pastor from an undue "care for oxen." It excited a love of study among his clerical associates. It had no small influence in starting our theological schools. It added force to his adage: "If a minister does not give himself to his office, he will give his office to himself."

[1] The Franklin pastor occasionally suffered a pecuniary loss. He once loaned a sum of money to a friend, who offered the name of a rich and upright man as his bondsman. Emmons regarding suretyship as opposed to the direct teachings of the Bible, and as inconsistent with the spirit of the Golden Rule, replied: "That man will not be profited in any way by this transaction, and it is not right that he should take the risk. I hope and expect that you will pay me; if you do not, the loss belongs to me for trusting you, and I alone, will bear it." The borrower failed and Emmons bore it, saying: "Glad I am that there is no bondsman."

[2] Am. Quar. Reg. Vol. XV. pp. 249, 250.

Digitized by Google

Early in his ministerial life he commenced the study of the Hebrew Language, and pursued it so far as to enable him to read intelligently and satisfactorily the Commentaries on the Hebrew Bible. His library contained the needful apparatus for Hebrew investigations, as for Greek and Latin.[1] He had no acquaintance with the German language, although he perused the English translations of the German treatises on theology. He was a warm personal, though not a theological friend of Rev. Dr. Prentiss, of Medfield, Mass., and through him had ready access to the rich parochial library[2] of that town. He was also a favorite of the father of Miss Hannah Adams, of Medfield, and was often gratified with the loan of books from that gentleman's large collection. At Brown University and at Harvard College, he had pupils or admirers who were faithful in sending him rare volumes from the alcoves of those institutions. During a part of the revolutionary war, when the college edifice at Providence "was occupied as a barrack for the militia, and afterward as a hospital for the French troops, the college library was removed" to the immediate vicinity of Dr. Emmons, and placed under the care of Rev. William Williams, the pastor of the Baptist Church in Wrentham, and for forty-seven years one of Emmons's nearest clerical neighbors.

In regard to the literature which he mastered, the Franklin student was a representative of other New England divines. They were not so remarkable for reading many volumes, as for reading thoroughly and well. They adopted for their motto, "*non multa sed multum.*" They followed the advice of Luther, that those who study in what art soever, "should betake themselves to the reading of some sure and certain sorts of books oftentimes over and over again; for to read many sorts of books produceth more and rather confusion, than to learn thereout any thing certainly or perfectly, like as those that dwell everywhere and remain certainly in no place, such do well nowhere nor are

[1] The writer of this Memoir has done injustice to the subject of it, by affirming, in another place, what was then deemed correct, that "Dr. Emmons knew exactly as much of Hebrew as Augustine ever learned, and would by no means suffer in comparison with Richard Baxter, of whom we read, 'Of Hebrew, he scarcely knew any thing; his acquaintance with Greek was not profound; and even in Latin, as his works show, he must be regarded, by a scholar, as little better than a barbarian.'"

[2] See Sprague's Annals, Vol. I. p. 678.



Digitized by Google

anywhere at home." "Beware of the man of one book," was in good measure applicable to the New England divines. Cotton Mather's library contained about two thousand volumes. President Edwards's did not contain more than a quarter of that number. His son's contained about half of it. Yet many of their books were folios or quartos. They were such books as forced the reader to work. They were books to be studied over and over. The leaves of such as have been preserved to us, are thumbed or dog-eared. Dr. Emmons read more than the majority of New England divines; more indeed than the majority of scholars, for he persevered in his literary habits through his threescore years and ten of mature reflection. He read with enthusiasm and critical acumen. The neat marks which he made on the margin of his Kames and Hume, indicate the vigilance and sharp discrimination, that let not the slightest hint escape him. "The worst books," he used to say, "are the best; they compel us to think." Dr. Ide says of him:

"He read a great deal, but he studied more. *Few men* in his profession ever read more books. It was astonishing to see with what eagerness he would seize a new publication, and, if a work of importance, with what avidity he would devour its contents. But in the acquisition of new materials to the stock of his knowledge, the relation which these bore to other facts in his possession, was always a primary object of his inquiry. *There are men* who have read more books than Dr. Emmons; but there have been few, if any, who have read so many with deep attention, and with so thorough an examination of the subjects of which they treated."[1]

He began to study in 1762; he ceased to preach in 1827; during these sixty-five years he was an earnest student. "He always sat," writes one of his friends, "when he was alone in his study, with a book or pen in his hand." During ten of the years which followed his resignation of the pastoral office, he continued to be an assiduous *reader*, although he then relaxed his habits of intense, energetic *study*. It may be safely affirmed, then, that he devoted seventy-five years to the perusal of books, the meditation on their contents, and the writing on themes suggested by them. The thoughts of a man who spent more time in

[1] Memoir, p. 42.

Digitized by Google

his study than many eminent authors have spent on the earth, have a value of their own.

### § 5. *The Character of his Familiar Books.*

"I knew," writes the considerate scholar, that "it would be in vain to propose an end, without devising and adopting proper means to accomplish it. Accordingly, I resolved to divide and appropriate my time to the various branches of knowledge which I meant to pursue, and to furnish myself with a good collection of books. These I spared no pains nor expense to obtain. I examined the libraries of my brethren in the ministry. I searched the old books which I found among my people. I kept my eye upon the catalogues of the booksellers;[1] and among the great variety of authors which I found upon different subjects, I made it a rule to select the *best* and the *worst;* that is to say, those who had written most ingeniously *in favor* of the truth, and *against* it. I meant to read upon both sides of disputed subjects, and wished to obtain those authors on both sides, who had exhibited the most light. Though I was not able to purchase many books at a time, yet I constantly made additions to my collection, by buying and exchanging authors" [he often stimulated a ministerial brother by sending to him some fresh publication, and requesting the loan of some other new volume in return]; "so that I rarely failed of procuring any book which I felt a strong inclination to read. Providence often smiled upon me in this respect. The Rev. Diodate Johnson, the minister of the church to which I at first belonged, gave me, at his death, a donation of forty dollars, which I appropriated to the purchase of books. My own congregation had a pretty parish library, when I was settled among them; and in the year 1786, Dr. Franklin presented them a donation of some of the most celebrated English authors.[2] By these means I generally had a

[1] Notwithstanding his zeal for new books, he had an inveterate disinclination to buy them by *subscription*. When visited by a book-agent, especially in his study-hours, his pithy words were, "I do not subscribe for books; I *make* them."

[2] "The 'Western Precinct' [of Wrentham] obtained an act of incorporation, and became the town of Franklin in 1778. The name was selected in honor of Benjamin Franklin, LL.D. While Dr. Franklin was in France, a friend of his in Boston wrote

Digitized by Google

supply of all those kinds of books which were necessary and useful to a divine; and I never wished for others, because I meant to confine my studies to my own profession, and not waste time in acquiring mere speculative knowledge." — *Memoir of himself.*

Both the Town Library and the Parish Library were kept in Dr. Emmons's house. It is interesting to know the character of the works which were given to the town by Dr. Franklin. The following is an extract from the old printed catalogue of the volumes presented by him:

Clark's Works; Hoadley's Works; Barrow's Works; Ridgeley's Works; Locke's Works; Sydney's Works; Montesquieu's Spirit of the Laws; Blackstone's Commentaries; Watson's Tracts; Newton on the Prophecies; Law on Religion; Priestley's Institutes; Priestley's Corruptions; Price and Priestly; Lyndsey's Apology; Lyndsey's Sequel; Abernethy's Sermons; Duchal's Sermons; Price's Morals; Price on Providence; Price on Liberty; Price's Sermons; Price on the Christian Scheme; Needham's Free State; West & Lyttleton on the Resurrection; Stennet's Sermons; Addison's Evidences; Gordon's Tacitus; Backus's History; Lardner on the Logos; Watts's Orthodoxy and Charity; Doddridge's Life; Fordyce's Sermons; Life of Cromwell; Fulfilling of the Scriptures; Watts on the Passions; Watts's Logic; Christian History; Prideaux's Connections; Cooper on Predestination; Cambridge Platform; Burkett on Personal Reformation; Barnard's Sermons; History of the Rebellion; Janeway's Life; American Preacher; Thomas's Laws of Massachusetts; American Constitutions; Young's Night Thoughts; Pilgrim's Progress; Life of Baron Trench; Erskine's Sermons; The Spectator, etc.

The following is an extract from an old printed Catalogue of the "pretty Parish Library" to which Emmons refers, and to which he had constant access:

Robertson's History of Charles V.; Robertson's History of America;

to him, that a town in the vicinity of Boston had chosen his name, by which to be known in the world, and he presumed, as they had no bell with which to summon the people to meeting on the Sabbath, a present of such an instrument from him would be very acceptable, especially as they were about erecting a new meeting-house. The doctor wrote in reply, that he presumed *the people in* FRANKLIN *were more fond of sense than of sound;* and accordingly presented them with a handsome donation of books for the use of the Parish." — *Dr. Smalley's Centennial Sermon*, pp. 7, 8.

Digitized by Google

Rollin's Roman History; Ramsay's History of the War; Brydone's Tour; Guthrie's Geography; Edward's History of Redemption; Edwards on Original Sin; Ogilvie on Infidelity; Burlamaqui's Principles of Law; Beccaria on Crimes and Punishments; Anson's Voyage; Vicar of Wakefield; Dodley's Æsop; Richardson on Shakespeare; Lavater's Aphorisms; Steven's Lectures; Edwards on the Will; Franklin's Miscellanies; Rollin's Ancient History; Carver's Travels; The Task; Doddridge's Rise and Progress; Montesquieu's Rise and Fall of Rome; Putnam's life; Webster's Dissertations; Zimmerman on Solitude; Life of William Pitt; Josephus's History; Mason on Self-knowledge; Stackhouse's History of the Bible; Watts's Miscellanies; Franklin's Electricity; Residence in France; Hutchinson's History of Massachusetts; Minot's History of Massachusetts; Wilberforce on Religion; Edwards's Sermons; History of Charles XII.; Robertson's Proofs; History of Jacobinism; Peter the Great; Williams's History of Vermont; Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations; Bellamy's Glory of the Gospel; Orton's Discourses; Belknap's Biography; Franklin's Life; Marshall's Life of Washington; Atlas; Smith on the Prophecies; Practical Piety; Hopkins's Life; Buchanan's Researches; Johnson's Rasselas, etc.

Among the works from which Emmons has made lengthened quotations or abstracts are, the writings of Josephus, Dr. Reynolds, Dr. Charnock, Richard Baxter, Cotton Mather, Dr. Waterland, Bishop Bull, the "judicious Hooker," Dr. Benson, Dr. Samuel Clark, Dr. Burnet, Dr. Shuckford, Dr. Prideaux, Lindsey, Leslie (Short Method), Dr. Cave (Lives of the Fathers), Basnage, Condorcet, Peter Joseph Macquer (Chemistry), Colquhoun on the Police of the Metropolis of London, Sale's Koran, the History of Popery, the History of Ignatius Loyola, Shakespeare, Watts, Young, Fenelon, etc.

Among the works which he considered fundamentally erroneous, but which he is known to have studied with great care, are the ethical or theological writings of Dr. Whitby, Dr. John Taylor, Dr. Chauncey, Dr. Priestley, Dr. Price, Bishop Law, Bishop Warburton, Dr. Paley, David Hume, Mr. Belsham, Lord Shaftesbury, Chevalier Ramsay, Adam Smith (in whose treatise on the Moral Sentiments Emmons took a deep interest), Lord Herbert, Bolingbroke, Tindale, Dr. Hartley, Morgan, Godwin, Gibbon, some of the writings of Helvetius, Voltaire, etc.

Digitized by Google

Among the works which he studied, and to which he alludes in his writings, are those of Dr. Gill, Stackhouse, Dr. John Brown (Essays on Lord Shaftesbury), John Locke, Bishop Watson, Bishop Hoadley, John Newton, Bryant (Ancient Mythology), the Earl of Nottingham, Whiston, Gregory (Comparative View), Dr. Samuel Johnson, Pierce (Vindication of the Dissenters), Leigh (Critica Sacra), Dr. Mosheim (Ecclesiastical History), Winthrop (History of New England), the writings of Relly, White (on Universal Salvation), Murray, Huntington, Cicero, Seneca, Tacitus.

Among the additional works belonging to his library were the following: Cudworth's Intellectual System, Works of Reid, Beattie, Frances Hucheson, Stewart, Brown, Campbell, Vattel, John Calvin, Dr. Owen, Howe, Mede, Waterland, Leland, Horseley, Shaw, Gale, Stillingfleet, William Worthington, Warburton, Dunlap, Hallet (Notes on Peculiar Texts), Lewis (Antiquities of the Hebrew Republic), Henry's Commentaries, Poole (Synopsis and Annotations), the New England divines, such as Stoddard, Shepherd, the Edwardses, Bellamy, Hopkins, Smalley, Strong, Hemmenway, Lathrop, etc.

Professor Woods of Andover, has written: "In forming his opinions on moral, metaphysical, and religious subjects, he [Emmons] made but little use of books, but thought for himself, and relied with unusual confidence upon the results of his own reasonings." In penning this sentence, Dr. Woods must have intended to compare the Franklin divine with such European scholars as Humboldt, the Grimms, Neander, Tholuck. Emmons was not a *reader* but a *thinker*, in the comparison with such omnivorous and quick moving students. When set over against the Encyclopedists of his day, it was said even of Des Cartes: "We must nevertheless grant you, that he did not read much, and had a small parcel of books."[1] We do not pretend that Emmons was a "learned man" in the *technical* sense of that word; neither was Dr. Franklin, whom in some points he resembled; neither were Dr. Witherspoon, nor Drs. Hill, Dick, Chalmers, Wardlaw. Men admire Jacob Boehme, partly for the fact that he was *not* learned. Justin Martyr

[1] Life of Des Cartes, p. 266.

Digitized by Google

knew but little, Augustine nothing at all, of the Hebrew language. It would have been doubtless a great gain to Emmons, if he had pursued to a greater extent his Hebrew study. He said in his old age: "If I were a young man, I would acquire a mastery of that tongue, and I advise all young ministers to acquire it." He would have been the gainer also, if he had adopted the plan of his classmate, Governor Treadwell, reviewing as often as possible through life, his entire course of collegiate study. Emmons read with great care the *theological* writings of Dr. Priestley; if he had also read the essays of that author on chemistry, and if he had kept pace with the schools in the various branches of natural science, he would more completely have filled out his own ideal of a divine.

One reason why the real amount of Emmons's learning has not been appreciated, is the fact that in his discourses he so unfrequently refers to books. Dr. James W. Alexander might have alluded to Emmons with as much pertinency as to any scholar, when he wrote: "Though given to quotation myself, I think it below the highest method. There is more in a man who spins all out *e propriis visceribus*. This has often struck me in my good father, — no scraps, no pretty phrases, no poetry, no Latin sentences. The other way is a sign of weakness; *habeas confitentem reum*. Yet still more am I convinced that a man must be himself, and that he gains by following his bent."[1]

### § 6. *Mode of prosecuting his studies.*

#### *a.* His own Statement of his Method.

"But I was sensible," writes the judicious student, "that both time and books might be detrimental to the real improvement of the mind, unless they were properly used. And in order to make the best use of these two great advantages, I determined to govern myself in the prosecution of my studies, by particular rules.

"1. I made a practice of paying my principal attention to but

[1] Forty years' Familiar Letters of Dr. James W. Alexander, Vol. II. pp. 46, 47.

Digitized by Google

one subject at a time. This had a happy tendency to engage all the powers of the mind, and especially to set invention at work; which is a faculty very necessary to investigate truth, and which nothing but necessity, or a firm resolution, will call into exercise. It is much easier to read, to hear, to converse, than to investigate; which requires the whole attention of the mind to be steadily fixed upon one subject. Reading and conversing upon a subject will never make a man master of it, without close and steady thinking, and a fair and full decision. And no man can make a fair and full decision upon any abstract or intricate point, until he has thoroughly examined it on all sides, and fairly balanced the principal arguments for and against it. Hence I perceived the importance of attending to but one subject at a time, and of not leaving that subject before I came to a satisfactory and final decision. A final decision, I say, because I found by experience that the more I thought, or read, or conversed upon any subject, the less I understood it, if, after all, I did not discover sufficient evidence to form a full and final decision. But when I steadily pursued a subject until I had discovered the truth, and formed my decisive judgment, then I felt that I had actually added to my common stock of real knowledge; which gave me new power and inclination to make farther improvements.

"2. I accustomed myself to attend to all subjects which appeared to be naturally connected with divinity, and calculated to qualify me for the work of the ministry. That all the arts and sciences bear some relation to each other, was long ago observed by Cicero, and has ever since been found to be true by all who have read and studied upon an extended scale. It is extremely difficult to gain a clear understanding of natural and revealed religion, without a considerable degree of general knowledge. The more I attended to theology, the more I was convinced of the importance of acquainting myself with history, ethics, metaphysics, and civil polity. This led me to read freely upon these subjects, and to form my own opinions upon them." — *Memoir of himself.*

Before he wrote his sermon on the Law of Paradise, he studied the whole of Blackstone's "Commentaries on the Laws of

Digitized by Google

England." The Works of Edmund Burke he did not read until he had reached his seventieth year. Then he said: "They almost took me off my feet." "I marvel that any man can agree with Burke in politics, and with Priestley in religion." Of Montesquieu on the Spirit of the Laws, he remarked: "I have often tried to read him, though I never could hold out." He studied, as intensely as he abhorred, Godwin's Political Justice. One of his sermons contains an elaborate refutation of the irreligious theories defended in that treatise.

His memoir continues in a style indicating that the young man of twenty-eight years, was in advance of his contemporaries:

"I thought it was an injury and reproach to clergymen, that they so much disregarded general knowledge, and paid their whole attention to divinity, and even to a few points in that noble and extensive science. There is no doubt, but that many errors and wild notions in religion have originated from the ignorance of those who have undertaken to preach the gospel, without understanding the connection and harmony of its fundamental doctrines. Such preachers seldom attend to any sentiments but the peculiarities of their own sect; and vainly imagine that all are heretics who do not subscribe to their contracted creed. To avoid this mistake, I resolved to read and study divinity in a liberal manner, and not to adopt the sentiments of my own denomination, nor to reject the sentiments of other denominations, without examining them for myself, in the best manner I was able. And I can truly say, nothing has contributed more to establish me in the belief of my own system of religious sentiments, than those authors who have written the most forcibly against them; and nothing has assisted me more in defending and maintaining the pure doctrines of the gospel, than a general acquaintance with the errors and delusions which have prevailed in the Christian world. I have made it my practice, in the whole course of my ministry, to read extensively, and to examine as critically and impartially as I could, all ancient and modern errors and innovations in religion; which I have never seen any reason to regret.

"3. Though I read a variety of books, yet I always meant, if I could, to read the proper books at a proper time; that is, when I was investigating the subject upon which they treated. I



Digitized by Google

gained but little advantage from reading any author without a particular object in view; but when I read any author with reference to a particular object, I then took much more notice of what he said, understood it better, and derived much more benefit from his writings. I usually restrained myself from reading for amusement; and put captivating books out of sight, when I had occasion of consulting authors upon any important subject." — *Memoir of himself.*

A friend in the legal profession had loaned to Dr. Emmons two volumes of a novel by Sir Walter Scott; and as the lawyer was afterward passing the Dr.'s house, the venerable man rushed out with the novel in his hand, exclaiming: "Take these volumes out of my sight; never lend them to me again; I have been crying ever since I began to read them." He was not always so rigid; for he says:

"At times, however, I read some authors for the sake of their beautiful style, their lively descriptions, and moral sentiments. Some few novels possessed these excellences, and gained my attention at leisure hours. But I read deep, well-written tragedies, for the sake of real improvement in the art of preaching. They appeared to me the very best books to teach true eloquence. They are designed to make the deepest impression on the human mind, and many of them are excellently calculated to produce this effect. A preacher can scarcely find a better model for constructing a popular, practical, pathetic discourse, than a good tragedy; which all along prepares the mind for the grand catastrophe, without discovering it, till the whole soul is wrought into a proper frame to feel the final impression.

"I found also much benefit from reading a variety of sermons. I read ancient authors, for the sake of the matter contained in their discourses. They were more *sentimental*[1] than modern preachers. I found good ideas poorly expressed, in old sermons; and those ideas I felt myself at liberty to borrow, and

[1] Dr. Emmons often uses the word *sentimental* as synonymous with doctrinal, or, as Webster defines it, "abounding with sentiment or just *opinions* or reflections." He even goes further than this, and employs the word "sentiment," to denote *false* opinion as well as *true*. He would not hesitate to speak of Jefferson's Messages as *sentimentally* incorrect.

Digitized by Google

put into my own words. Besides, the Puritan writers breathed a most pious and devout spirit into all their discourses; which I wished to imbibe, and transfuse into my own sermons. I read modern sermonizers, for the benefit of learning the various methods of constructing sermons, and for the purpose of gaining a neat and perspicuous style.

"But lest I should become a plagiary, and imitator of any man, I made a point of choosing my subject and my text, and of laying out my method, before I read any author, who had treated on the same text. For I found, if I read another man's sermon before I had done this, I was naturally led to follow his track, or take peculiar pains to avoid it. Nor did I ever mean to make any single author my general model of sermonizing; though I wished to unite as much as I could the peculiar excellences of Watts, Doddridge, and Edwards. But it is probable that I did approach nearer to Mr. Edwards's manner, than to that of any other man, except Mr. Smalley, my admired instructor. His great excellence consisted in representing divine truths in a clear light, and in reconciling them with each other. This I endeavored to imitate in the general course of my preaching." — *Memoir of himself.*

Remarkable as the young minister was, in that early day, for his love of letters, he was yet more noted for *mastering* the books that he perused. He seldom named a certain eminent divine without intimating a wish that "the good man would not agree with *every* author whom he examined *last*." He continues his Autobiography:

"4. Though I was fond of reading, yet I was still more desirous of examining and digesting what I read. I always found a disadvantage from reading more than I could digest. This never failed to unsettle my mind, and give it a bias towards scepticism. And I believe there is scarcely any circumstance, which has a more direct tendency to turn learned men into sceptics, than reading too much and thinking too little. When a large number of different and opposite ideas upon a subject are collected in the mind, without being properly examined and arranged, it requires more than common discernment to discover

Digitized by Google

where truth lies; and many a weak mind has, I doubt not, been plunged in darkness, by too much light.

"To investigate truth, it is necessary to proceed gradually, and attend to but one point at a time, till the mind has gone clear round the subject, and viewed it in every attitude. The natural process is, first to separate from the subject of inquiry whatever does not belong to it; then to consider what is in favor of the sentiment examined; and lastly, to weigh the arguments against it. Studying is often compared with digging; and in digging stones there is peculiar art. The man who understands the business, will not leave a stone because it will not move by his first exertion. He will continue to try it in different positions, until he has found that in which he can apply all his strength to advantage, and effect his purpose.[1] Steady, patient, persevering thinking, will generally surmount every obstacle in the search of truth.

"Some subjects, indeed, are too high for human investigation. When a difficult subject is proposed, the first question is, whether it lies within the province of reason to decide. This, in most cases, can be easily and quickly determined, because there is a wide difference between difficulties and mysteries. If the question does not involve a real mystery, there is sufficient encouragement to pursue it. And the more difficult it is, and the more others have neglected to examine it, or have failed of success, the more worthy it is of peculiar attention. Accordingly, I have made it my practice to seek after and examine the more difficult points in divinity. This I have found to be the best way for me to make proficiency in real and useful knowledge. By solving one difficulty, I was enabled to solve another; and every new solution gave me new ability and new resolution, to pursue my studies with greater diligence and perseverance.

"5. In the course of my studies, I have endeavored to obtain certainty upon all points which would admit of it. Many points in divinity, as well as in other branches of science, will not admit of demonstration, and must remain problematical, after

[1] "East Haddam," says Dr. Field in his History, p. 8, "is a good grazing township, less hilly and rocky than Haddam, though of a soil *rather hard, especially in Millington*," where young Emmons learned to "compare studying with digging." See p. 21.

Digitized by Google

all human researches; but some may be brought to a fair and full decision. In all cases in which I supposed certainty could be obtained, I made it a practice to pursue a subject until I was completely satisfied I had found the truth. I have spent more time, more attention, and more hard study, upon critical and difficult points, than, perhaps, most theologians have been willing to do; and I have never regretted the time and pains I have spent. For I have found, that the knowledge of the most difficult subjects I ever attended to, has thrown the greatest light upon the whole system of divinity; and more than any thing else, enabled me to discover the connection and harmony which run through the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. And though men may be good Christians, and even good preachers, without understanding the mutual connection and consistency of the first principles of Christianity, yet I believe that no man can be a great and thorough divine, without critically examining and understanding what are generally considered the most difficult subjects in divinity.

"6. I have made it my practice to improve every good opportunity of conversing upon theological subjects. While I was a candidate, I derived a good deal of benefit from conversing with both old and young ministers. Though I soon gave up the idea of convincing those I happened to differ from in sentiment, yet I seldom failed of getting knowledge, by discoursing freely with both orthodox and heterodox divines." — *Memoir of himself.*

Here we are reminded of several apothegms which often fell from his lips, and which were the ripe fruit of his growing experience. To a young minister he said: "Never hope to convince a man, by disputing, after he is forty years old." But, it was asked, will not some light be struck out from the concussion of the flint with the steel. "Certainly. You may *get* light, but you will not *give* much. *You* will learn from *him*, more than *he* will learn from *you*. But when you find that you can derive no further good from him, close your dispute. He is a hopeless case." His practice accorded with his precept. He would very often engage for his own improvement in oral discussion with men of advanced life; but when he thought that he had *ex-*



Digitized by Google

*hausted their stock of knowledge*, he would stop at once. They often thought and reported, that he was *silenced* by their logic. But during all his silence he was soliloquizing mentally: "No use, no use;" "Vanity of vanities," and "Vexation of spirit;" "Ichabod, Ichabod." — Emmons continues his Narrative:

"After I was settled, I fell into very happy ministerial connections, which afforded me peculiar advantages for improvement by conversation.[1] Nor did I fail of reaping benefit from conversing with those whom I undertook to teach divinity. I found that after I had read, and thought, and even written upon a subject, I could rarely master it without the aid of conversation. I generally perceived, that in the course of free discussion, some thoughts would be suggested, which had never occurred to me in reading, or thinking upon the subject.[1] Though only superficial knowledge can be gained by mere conversation, yet this, in connection with reading and thinking, may be of great service in theological researches. But in conversing upon subjects, I never did of choice take that side of a question which was contrary to my present opinion, lest I should insensibly warp my mind, and lead myself into error.

"Such were the general rules by which I meant to govern myself in the course of my theological studies." — *Mem. of himself.*

b. Questions from his Common Place Book.

Among the methods to which Emmons resorted in his youth, for the improvement of his mind, was the keeping of commonplace books. He recorded in them interesting extracts from authors whom he esteemed. One of these books, which was in use about the time of his entrance upon his Franklin pastorate, contains notes on chronology, history, psychology and theology. A fragment of another book is devoted to geography. The following list of questions, penned as they occurred to his mind, and

[1] Not only the conversation, but the correspondence of the early Hopkinsian divines was, in great measure, theological. They were on the *qui vive* for scientific intelligence. Thus in two of Dr. Burton's familiar epistles to Dr. Levi Hart, he writes: "If there are any new ideas started by any in your acquaintance, you will oblige me much [by stating] them in your next letter." "I should be very happy to know what the difficulties are with which gentlemen your way feel themselves pressed, upon the subject of atonement. This country produces but few publications in divinity; but all that are or may be published this way, shall be sent you as soon as they can be obtained."

Digitized by Google

probably in or about the year 1773, illustrates the method of his youthful miscellaneous inquiries.

QUESTIONS PROPOSED FOR SOLUTION.

1. Whether it is now lawful to eat blood?

2. Whether an atonement sufficient for the pardon of one sinner, is sufficient for the pardon of all?

3. Whether men are by nature *totally* depraved?

4. Whether Samson was guilty of suicide or self-murder?

5. Whether the mind *always* thinks?

6. Whether *love* is the *first* exercise of a regenerate man?

7. Whether that first *exercise* of love be benevolence and not complacence?

8. Whether deception is lawful?

9. Whether a man ought *always* to follow the dictates of conscience?

10. Whether stealing ought to be punished with death?

11. Whether it is now lawful to take an oath before a civil magistrate?

12. Whether a man is accountable for thoughts in his sleep?

13. Whether Melchisedec was Christ?

14. Whether it is right for one church member to go to law with another?

15. Whether there was in reality such a man as Job?

16. Whether there was a rainbow before the flood?

17. Whether saints ought to pray for perfection in this life?

18. Whether saints that know each other in this world, will know each other in the next?

19. Whether departed saints are acquainted with the affairs of this world?

20. Whether the happiness of saints will be eternally increasing?

21. Whether the saints will be *properly rewarded* for any holy exercises, but such as they had in this world?

22. Whether the finally impenitent will be *properly punished* for any evil exercises, but such as they had here?

23. Whether from the happiness of *communion*, may be argued the necessity for a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead?

24. What is Conscience?

25. How is the divine inspiration of particular books of Scripture to be proved?

26. Whether the day of grace with sinners does not last till death, excepting in the case of the unpardonable sin?

Digitized by Google

27. Whether there is any *act of God* at the moment of the sinner's justification?

28. Whether there is a *personal* indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the souls of believers?

29. Whether it is now absolutely necessary to believe that Christ is already come in the flesh?

32. Whether Joseph's selling corn to the Egyptians was extortion?

33. Whether Saturday or Sabbath day night ought to be kept holy?

34. Whether the fourth command is a moral precept?

35. Whether a communicant, that finds himself unregenerate, should (upon Mr. Edwards's principles) abstain from the Sacrament?

36. Whether there was a new creation of bread, when Christ fed the multitudes?

37. Whether God can create a sinful being?

38. Whether the thoughts or exercises of every created being, are not distinct from each other, as to the order of *time* as well as order of *nature*?

39. Whether incorporeal spirits cannot see each other as plainly as we now see matter?

40. Whether incorporeal spirits cannot see the eternal self-existent Spirit as plainly as they see one another?

41. Whether one baptized by a layman ought to be rebaptized?

42. What works is *faith opposed* to in the Bible?

43. Whether men must know that God is an infinitely glorious being, in order to prove that their sins are infinite evils, from the dignity of his person?

44. Whether the grief, that good men feel on account of sin and iniquity which abounds in the world, is wholly owing to their want of faith that all things shall eventually terminate in the glory of God and the highest good?

45. Whether there is any *true virtue* in righteousness, only as it implies benevolence, — or any *moral evil* in unrighteousness, only as it implies want of benevolence? And if so,

46. Whether it may not be *just* to inflict punishment or pain upon an *innocent* being, under certain circumstances, when a good end may be answered by it?

47. Whether all ignorance of duty is criminal?

48. Whether a man may with propriety pray that his ticket in a lottery may draw a prize, after he knows that the lottery is drawn, though uncertain whether his ticket is fortunate?

49. If God had made but one intelligent creature, and he had sinned,

Digitized by Google

could divine goodness and justice have required God to punish him eternally?

50. Does God's right to govern the world depend solely upon his being the Creator?

51. Are the *positive* commands of God as much founded in the reason and nature of things, as his *moral*?

52. Will the sins of good men be exposed to view at the last day?

53. Could the world have been created any sooner than it was?

54. If Adam had committed any other sin than eating the forbidden fruit, would it have been equally destructive to his posterity?

55. If Eve only had sinned, would her sin alone have ruined her posterity?

56. What is the omnipresence of God?

57. Is conservation only creation continued?

58. Are there any purely incorporeal spirits except God?

59. Hath God affections?

60. Can a perfectly holy creature be made completely miserable?

61. Why need a justified person pray for pardon?

62. Are men *active* in regeneration?

63. Does true repentance imply a sorrow for the *event* of sin?

64. Are all holy affections properly volitions?

65. Can more than *one volition* exist in the mind at once?

66. Is there any increase of existence by creation?

67. Is all anger in man sinful?

68. Can any man who is not sent of God, work *real* miracles?

69. Does God feel as much benevolence towards a sinner in hell, as he felt towards him whilst he lived in this world, and enjoyed many signal favors and blessings?

70. Are any adult persons saved without the external means of the Gospel?

71. Does personal identity consist in consciousness?

72. Is there any explicit contract and visible intercourse between any wicked men and the devil, here in this world?

### His Apothegms on the Method of Study.

In his conversation and in his writings, Dr. Emmons often let fall sententious remarks, which either are, or else suggest, the laws by which he regulated his own scientific habits, and by which he would advise other clergymen to regulate theirs. The following is a specimen of these apothegms:

Digitized by Google

"Habituate yourself to examine the evidence of every thing you believe, without trusting to education, former opinion, or the assertion of others.

"Begin the study of divinity at the root, and not at the branches; that is to say, begin at the first principles of theology, which are few and plain, and afterwards trace them out in their various consequences, relations, and connections.

"In order to fix your first principles, or fundamental doctrines, read, besides the Bible, a few of the best authors on each side of the point you would wish to establish.

"In reading authors, aim more at possessing yourself with their general scheme and principal arguments, than with their particular expressions and incidental sentiments; and while you labor to retain their ideas, labor to forget their words, which, if retained, will tend to prevent your making their ideas your own. Therefore, abound not in extracts.

"Follow not too strictly the path of any particular divine or divines; for, by *following*, you will never overtake them; but endeavor, if possible, to find out some new, nearer, and easier way, by which you may get before them, and really add some pittance to the common stock of theological knowledge.

"If you find a hill in the path of science, climb over it and not run around it. Then you will have made some perceptible advance; but one may travel on a plain ever so long, and seem to make no progress.

"Never try to avoid difficulties in theology, but seek for them.

"Let divinity be your supreme study, with an eye to which let all your other reading, study, conversation and remarks be directed.

"There is not so much difference in men's ideas of first principles and elementary truths as is commonly thought; a greater difference lies in their power of reasoning from these principles.

"Just definitions, like just distinctions, either prevent or end disputes.

"Many a weak mind has been plunged into darkness by too much light.

"Be careful how you take up a book, especially an entertaining one, with which you have no particular concern.

"Read the old authors which have stood the test of time.

Digitized by Google

"Read with a particular object in view.

"Every man should study himself, and adopt such rules of diet, and of mental and moral discipline, as suit his own peculiarities.

"Follow the Chinese maxim: 'A wise man will submit himself to circumstances, just as water shapes itself to the vessel that contains it.'

"He is a learned man who understands one subject, and a very learned man who understands two subjects.

"Never despair of a student who has one clear idea.

"It surpasses all human calculation, how much knowledge may be derived from a small original stock. It is like a spark, which is capable of setting the whole material world on fire.

"A good retreat is next to a victory.

"Great objects form great minds.

"Great men always commit great errors.

"Make a practice of paying your principal attention to but one subject at a time, and steadily pursue it until you have discovered the truth and formed your decisive judgment.

"Though you may read a variety of books, always aim to read the proper books at the proper time, that is, when investigating the subject on which they treat."

Digitized by Google

# CHAPTER V.

## HIS FIRST MARRIAGE AND FAMILY.

### § 1. *Character of his first wife.*

"SUCH were the *rules* by which I *meant* to *govern* myself;" and Emmons *was*, as he *meant* to be, a man of rules and of self-government. The question may now arise whether this persevering student ever found the time to form a matrimonial alliance. He writes:

"I have briefly delineated my manner of life, from my childhood to the time of my settlement in the ministry. From that period till I entered into a family state, which was about two years, I lived in much retirement and tranquillity. I met with nothing where I resided, nor among my people, nor from any other quarter, which either disturbed my peace, or interrupted my studies. My principal concern was, to discharge the duties of the pastoral office faithfully. I loved my people ardently, and received continual marks of their kindness, esteem, and affection. My outward prospects were promising, and I anticipated scenes of prosperity and usefulness. I generally maintained nearness to God, and enjoyed almost constant light and peace in my own mind. I had time and opportunity for all the duties of devotion, which I performed with great punctuality, with sensible pleasure, and, I trust, with some sincerity. I felt very much detached both from the cares of life and the transactions of the world. Providence directed me to the choice of an agreeable companion, and I was married, April 6, 1775, to Miss Deliverance French, of Braintree [Mass.]."— *Memoir of himself.*



Digitized by Google

This lady was 'the grandchild of the grandchild of the Puritan, John Alden.' Her father was Moses French, of Braintree. Early in life she was under the pastoral care of Rev. Samuel Niles, an author of some note, whose grandson, Rev. Samuel Niles, of Abington, one of Emmons's most intimate friends, was also a native of Braintree, and an intimate in the family of Moses French.[1] A brother of Mr. Emmons's wife was Rev. Jonathan French, of Andover, Mass., who was one of the prominent men in devising that Seminary which was to have been set in operation in his parish, as the exponent of the Moderate Calvinism, distinct from the Hopkinsianism of his day.

The general testimony concerning the wife of Dr. Emmons more than confirms his own account of her.

"She possessed," he says, "a sprightly mind, a pious heart, and a most amiable natural disposition." "For more than two years, I enjoyed great comfort in my dear consort. She was a pattern of piety, prudence, condescension, benevolence, and cheerfulness. I never saw her in a passion. I never received an unkind expression from her lips. Whenever I returned from a journey, or even from a visit in the parish, she never failed to welcome me home by a smile on her countenance. I never knew an instance, in which she appeared designedly to give me a painful feeling. As she never meant to displease me, so it seemed impossible to be displeased with her. Hence our affections, instead of abating with time, mutually strengthened and increased. Having received a pious education, she early imbibed a peculiar veneration for ministers, whom she loved to see, converse with, and entertain. Notwithstanding she had a slender constitution, and was frequently exercised with bodily infirmities, yet she was neither gloomy nor impatient, but always maintained a calm, serene, cheerful spirit." — *Memoir of himself.*

### § 2. *Early Death of his Wife and Children.*

"As I was born on the twentieth of April, 1745, ordained on the twenty-first of April, 1773, and married on the sixth of April,

[1] For a notice of Mr. Niles, see Chapter VII. § 2, below.



Digitized by Google

1775, so our first child was born on the fourteenth of April, 1776. I proposed to name him after my grandfather, father, and one of my brothers; but my wife insisted upon calling him Nathanael, after my own name, to which, with some reluctance, I consented. In the next year, on June 23, 1777, we had another son born, whom we named Diodate Johnson, as a token of respect to the Rev. Diodate Johnson, of East Haddam, to whom I was under peculiar obligations of gratitude.[1] Our happiness was now at the summit. We had two lovely children, and a fair prospect of a flourishing family.

"But we were preparing for peculiar trials and affliction. My dear wife never enjoyed a moment of health, from the birth of her last child to her death. She soon fell into a decline, which terminated in a proper consumption, and put a period to her valuable life, June 22, 1778.[2] This was a great and heavy loss. It is true, indeed, I had long anticipated the sorrowful event; but when the parting moment came, it was distressing above any thing I had either anticipated or endured. It cast a gloom over all things around me, and damped all my earthly prospects. Though her conduct before and in her sickness gave me strong confidence that she was prepared to exchange this for a better world; yet this very circumstance served to increase the greatness of my loss, and the weight of my sorrow.

[1] See pp. 14, 15, above.

[2] The following is the inscription upon her grave-stone:

In Memory of Mrs.
Deliverance Emmons,
The late amiable Consort of the
Rev'd. Nathanael Emmons,
Who departed this life
June 22, 1778,
In the 36th year of her age.

In that dark hour! how all serene she lay,
Beneath the openings of celestial day.
Her soul retired from sense, refined from sin,
While the descending glory wrought within,
Then in a sacred calm, resigned her breath,
And as her eye-lids closed, she smiled in death.
O! Death, where is thy sting,
O! Grave, where is thy victory?

Digitized by Google

"I was now in a situation very lonely, but not altogether disconsolate. My much respected mother-in-law, who was a pious and amiable woman, and who had resided with me during her daughter's decline, continued to reside with me, and perform the part of a tender mother to her little grandchildren. These, at the same time, engrossed my attention and affections. The fondness I had entertained for their mother, I soon transferred to them, who became my idols, and the source of my greatest earthly comfort. They contributed to divert my mind and assuage my sorrows. They also raised my hopes of future felicity, in forming their minds, and preparing them to be useful in life; as they both appeared to possess a good degree of docility, and an amiable disposition. In this last particular, they manifested something very singular. Though they were very nearly of an age, yet I never knew them to contend about the smallest trifles. They discovered the tender, kind, condescending disposition of their departed mother, which took a strong hold of my heart. I loved them to excess; and God saw it was not safe for them, nor for me, that they should long continue in my hands.

"About two months after their parent's decease, I took a journey to Braintree, whither I carried their grandmother, and where I left her. I returned on Wednesday in the afternoon, when I found my eldest child sick of the dysentery. I was alone, and had nobody in the family but a hired man and maid. The care of the sick child chiefly devolved upon me, though not altogether. But on Friday my youngest child was seized with the same disorder, and would go to none but myself, if he could help it. I was now borne down with incessant attention to my children, and incessant concern for their lives. Their disorder increased every day, and became more and more alarming. On Monday the eldest fell into convulsion fits, and expired in extreme agonies, about one o'clock at night. His painful death deeply wounded my parental feelings; but I still had one gleam of hope left. My youngest child was just alive, and there was a bare possibility of his recovery; but before nine o'clock next morning, he also fell into convulsion fits, and died in the utmost anguish and distress. Thus, in one

Digitized by Google

day, all my family prospects were completely blasted."[1] — *Memoir of himself.*

### § 3. *The Effect of his Early Bereavements upon him.*

"My cup of sorrow," he continues, "was now filled to the brim, and I had to drink a full draught of the wormwood and the gall. It is impossible to describe what I felt. I stood a few moments, and viewed the remains of my two darlings, who had gone to their mother and to their long home, never to return.[2]

"But I soon found the scene too distressing, and retired to my chamber, to meditate in silence upon my forlorn condition. I thought there was no sorrow like unto my sorrow. I thought my burden was greater than I could bear. I felt as though I could not submit to such a complicated affliction. My heart rose in all its strength against the government of God, and then suddenly sunk under its distress, which greatly alarmed me. I sprang up, and said to myself, 'I am going into immediate distraction; I must submit, or I am undone for ever.' In a very few minutes my burden was removed, and I felt entirely calm and resigned to the will of God. I soon went down, attended to my family concerns, and gave directions respecting the interment of my children. I never enjoyed greater happiness in the course of my life, than I did all that day and the next. My mind was wholly detached from the world, and altogether employed in pleasing contemplation of God and divine things. I felt as

[1] The following is the inscription on the grave-stone of these favorite children:

In Memory of Nathanael
Emmons, & Diodate
Johnson Emmons,
Sons of the Rev'd.
Nathanael Emmons,
Both of whom died Sept. 8, 1778.
The eldest aged 2 years 4 months & 1 day,
The youngest aged 1 year, 2 months & 4 days.

"They were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death were not divided."

[2] "When bereavements come singly," he writes elsewhere, "and at a considerable distance from each other, they are much more easily borne; but when they come in a train and in thick succession, like the waves of the sea, billow after billow, they sink the mourner in the depths of sorrow."

Digitized by Google

though I could follow my wife and children into eternity, with peculiar satisfaction. And for some time after my sore bereavements, I used to look towards the burying-ground, and wish for the time when I might be laid by the side of my departed wife and dear little ones.[1]

"While I was thus under the correcting hand of Providence, I had great opportunity of gaining spiritual instruction. And though I was too stupid, yet I believe I learned some things, which I shall never forget, and for which I shall have reason always to bless God. I learned to moderate my expectations from the world, and especially from the enjoyment of children and earthly friends. I have scarcely ever thought of my present wife and children, without reflecting upon their mortality, and realizing the danger of being bereaved of them. And I have never indulged such high hopes concerning my present family, as I presumptuously indulged with respect to the family I have laid in the dust.[2] I have likewise learned, by past painful experience, to mourn with them who mourn, and to weep with them who weep. I used to think before I was bereaved, that I heartily sympathized with the afflicted, at funerals; but I now know that I never entered into their feelings, and was a stranger to

[1] "All things considered, [Christians] are willing and even desirous to leave the present for a future state, and [they] patiently and joyfully wait for death." Notwithstanding the frequency with which Emmons repeats this idea, he still believed, that "neither the young nor the old ought to give up the *hope* of living." "It is," he says, "an indication of impatience, ingratitude and irreconciliation to God, for any to omit praying for the continuance of their own life, or to desire others not to pray for it."

[2] It is remarkable that Dr. Emmons seldom trusted himself, even in his old age, to speak of the wife and the children whom he consigned to their early grave. He felt that she had been his idol, and he never intended to cherish a continued idolatry. When, almost ninety years of age, he was interrogated concerning her, he fixed his eyes upon the floor for a long time in silence; then looked up, and sighed out the words: "She was a pretty creature," and he would say no more. When, almost ninety-five years old, he was introduced to a resident of Braintree by the name of French, he uttered the significant words: "French is a name I always love." He has detailed his own experience in one of his sermons: "Parents in general are too fond of their children. And sometimes they are partial in their affections, and dote upon some son or daughter, who has [the] more promising appearance or talents. Now, God knows the feelings of parents better than they do themselves, and there is reason to think that He often takes away some of their darlings, to teach them to moderate their affections towards them that survive."



Digitized by Google

the heart of mourners. I now follow them into their solitary dwellings, and mourn with them after their friends and relatives have left and forgotten them. Their heaviest burden comes upon them while they are sitting alone, and reflecting upon the nature and consequences of their bereavements. This I now know was my case. How many painful hours did I experience in secret! And how many tears did I shed in silence! How dreary did my empty house appear! And how often did its appearance, after I had left it for a time, and returned to it, awaken afresh my past sorrows! The same causes, I am persuaded, have the same effects upon other mourners; and therefore I cannot easily forget them nor cease to sympathize with them, in their solitary hours.[1] In these, and various other respects, I have found it to have been good for me to bear the yoke in my youth." — *Memoir of himself.*

### § 4. *His Aphorisms on Affliction.*

The richest fruit comes from trees that have felt the knife of the arborist. The ripest consolations are administered by the pastor who has bled under the deepest wounds. Not many ministers have ever preached so many funeral sermons as Dr. Emmons. He photographed his own emotions upon the discourses in which he strove to illumine the hearts of his bereaved parishioners. Where he makes no direct allusion to himself, it is easy to see that he is uttering words which have cost him sighs and tears. Dr. Ide says that "Emmons left no diary: if he ever kept one, he destroyed it."[2] But his funeral sermons are a secret diary of his inward struggles and his sweet submission. His early burial of his family gave an emphasis to such aphoristic words as the following:

"'Hear ye the rod and who hath appointed it.' God would not call upon men to hear the voice of his rod, if his rod *had* no voice. Men often speak as plainly by what they do, as by what they say. And God often speaks as plainly by his rod, as by his

[1] He was always touched peculiarly, by the death of children: "and where," he writes, "is the family of children, who have not seen one or more of their little brothers or sisters laid in the sable coffin and lonely grave."

[2] Memoir, p. 40.

Digitized by Google

word."—"The men of wisdom will hear, understand and obey the voice of the rod of his wrath, which is his most solemn, imperious and impressive voice."

"It is no less absurd than criminal for the afflicted to think that their afflictions are greater than they can bear, when they can easily and instantly cast them upon the Lord, who can ease them of their burden."

"It is as reasonable to submit to the heaviest as to the lightest afflictions, and commonly much more easy; because the heaviest afflictions appear to come more immediately from the wisdom, goodness, and justice of the Deity, which are the most powerful motives to a filial fear, a holy confidence, and a sincere submission." "Aaron held his peace under a very heavy, and Jonah did not, under a very light affliction."

"The greatest trials and troubles always produce the greatest good, unless the afflicted abuse them, and refuse to be benefitted and comforted."

"The duty and happiness of the afflicted are intimately, naturally, and almost necessarily connected."

"In all cases, there is more ground to hope that the afflicted will derive spiritual benefit from their affliction, than that the prosperous will derive spiritual benefit from their prosperity."

"Many have done more good by dying, than they ever would or could do by living."

"God much oftener afflicts men for their profit, than he prospers them for their profit. Prosperity tends to corrupt the heart, but adversity to purify it. Prosperity tends to attach men to the world, but adversity to wean them from it. It is probable that prosperity has destroyed ten, where adversity has destroyed one."—Therefore "men have more reason to fear prosperity than adversity." "Those in prosperity have reason to rejoice with trembling, and those in adversity to rejoice with hope."

"There is much more danger of feeling too little, than of feeling too much, under divine chastisements."

"The hours of private sorrow are the most humbling. When we suffer in the presence of a multitude, our natural pride makes us bear the suffering with fortitude."

"Mankind commonly afflict themselves more than God afflicts them. Thousands suffer much more from anticipated evils

Digitized by Google

which they never meet with, than from the calamities which actually fall upon them."[1]

"Self-commiseration is self-gratification, and not self-denial, or true submission and resignation under the correcting hand of God."

"One affliction seems to be a presage of another; and while the unaffected and unresigned fly from the iron weapon, a bow of steel strikes them through."

"Death is one of the blessings inserted in the covenant of grace to believers. *Death is theirs;* for while it removes them from the presence of the body, it instantly translates them to the presence of the Lord."

"We should rejoice in God as the fountain of all blessedness, who remains the same perfectly good being, whether he directs the streams of his goodness *to* us, or whether he turns the streams of his goodness *from* us; yet to rejoice in God *always* is the most difficult duty which Christians have to perform."

[1] In a more colloquial way Dr. Emmons often uttered the counterpart of this observation: "Our most trying afflictions come unexpectedly. I have often seen the clouds of adversity gathering over Mendon hills, but they would generally disperse before they reached Franklin; but those troubles that come in at the back door are most grievous to be borne. We are unprepared for them, and the suddenness of their shock often prostrates us."

Digitized by Google

## CHAPTER VI.

### HIS SECOND MARRIAGE AND FAMILY: HIS HOME LIFE.

#### § 1. *Character of his Second Wife.*

THE youthful pastor was bereaved of his first family in the midst of the Revolutionary war. That war, as we shall perceive hereafter, was fraught with calamities to him. Many a revolutionary pensioner suffered less than he in person and estate, from the demoralizing conflict. Through all these afflictions he persevered in his industrious life, and in his single aim to become a good minister of Jesus Christ. He writes:

"In less than two years after my wife and two children died, I married [Martha] a daughter of the Rev. Chester Williams, of Hadley. Her father died when she was young, and her mother married the Rev. Samuel Hopkins, D. D., the immediate successor of Mr. Williams. She was well educated by her father Hopkins, who treated her with truly paternal tenderness, both while her mother lived and after her decease. She then took the principal care of his numerous family, some of whom were quite young. This gave her an opportunity of becoming well acquainted with domestic concerns, and qualified her to promote my personal comfort and public usefulness. By this second marriage I have had six promising children, two sons and four daughters. These all lived to adult age, and for nearly thirty-four years, I had but little sickness, and no breach in my family. I had peace in my parish, and some considerable success in my ministry." — *Memoir of himself.*

We cannot draw a picture of Dr. Emmons without giving a prominent place on the canvas to that "prudent wife" in whom "the heart of her husband (did) safely trust." Her



Digitized by Google

father was graduated at Yale College in 1735, and was a classmate of President Aaron Burr and Dr. Joseph Bellamy. He was a tutor in the college from 1738 to 1740; was ordained pastor of the church in Hadley about January 1741, and died October 13, 1753. "He was a member and the scribe of the ecclesiastical council that dismissed Jonathan Edwards from his pastorate in Northampton."[1] He was the son of Rev. Ebenezer Williams[2] of Pomfret, Connecticut, a Fellow of Yale College; "a fine scholar, a sound and discriminating divine." He was a nephew of Rev. John Williams of Deerfield, who was carried into captivity by the Indians. An own brother of Mrs. Emmons was Rev. Nehemiah Williams of Brimfield, Massachusetts, a classmate of Judge Theophilus Parsons at Harvard College in 1765–9. He was one of the first members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the author of an interesting volume of sermons, and an eminently devout man. One of Mrs. Emmons's half sisters was married to Rev. Dr. Spring of Newburyport; a second to Rev. Dr. Austin, pastor at Worcester, afterwards President of Burlington College; a third to Rev. William Riddel, who was one of Dr. Emmons's theological pupils; and a fourth to Rev. Leonard Worcester of Peacham, Vermont. These four strong men were in substantial agreement with Emmons on theological doctrines.[3] Each one of them had an independent mind, yet each looked up to the Franklin student with profound regard.

Dr. Hopkins of Hadley, their father-in-law, was a cousin of Dr. Hopkins of Newport, but was a firm opponent of his cousin's theology. He was wont to say: "I myself hate the Hopkinsian scheme, but my five daughters have fallen in love with it." He was not altogether free, however, from that pride which

[1] Sprague's Annals, Vol. I. p. 520. President Edwards, in his Journal, mentions Mr. Williams.

[2] For a lengthened account of Rev. Ebenezer Williams, see the Genealogy and History of the Family of Williams. By Stephen W. Williams, M. D., A. M. pp. 125–127.

[3] Rev. Mr. Worcester of Peacham received with favor during one period of his life, the theory of his acute brother, Dr. Noah Worcester, with regard to the person of Christ, and of the Holy Spirit; "but in the later years of his life," says President Smith, "I do not remember to have heard his orthodoxy impugned or even questioned in a single instance." See, however, Sprague's Annals, Vol. II. p. 455–460.

Digitized by Google

springs up naturally in the heart of a father, whose daughters have surrounded him with noted sons-in-law. On one occasion he solicited an exchange of pulpits with one of the most eminent pastors in the Commonwealth, on the plea that Mr. Spring, Mr. Emmons, and Mr. Austin had preached for him on the three preceding Sabbaths, and now he added: "You must preach on the fourth, so as to let me down easily to preach on the fifth."

The influence of Dr. Emmons over the churches will not be understood, unless it be remembered that his second marriage bound him to a large and an eminently intellectual circle of companions. His chief treasure, however, was in his wife, rather than in her connections. She was of a clerical race, and she preferred that her husband should be a student, and that like her father's near neighbor, Jonathan Edwards, he should be relieved of all secular care. "But Mr. Emmons, how can you possibly live on your small salary, under your burden of debt, and still perform no labor on your farm;" this was the question often addressed to him. "My wife supports me," was the answer as often returned.—"But Mr. Emmons," he was asked, "how can you in your poverty, always look and dress like a man of competent fortune?" He *might* have responded in the words of the wise man describing a virtuous woman: "*She* seeketh wool and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands; *she* layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff; *her* husband is known in the gates when he sitteth among the elders of the land." But, Mr. Emmons, where do your sons and daughters obtain their comely attire? "*She* looketh well to the ways of her household and eateth not the bread of idleness; *She* is not afraid of the snow for her household; for all *her* household are clothed with scarlet." But, Mr. Emmons, how can you sit week after week in your study, and never visit your parishioners, and yet retain their confidence? "*She* stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, *she* reacheth forth her hands to the needy: *She* openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in *her* tongue is the law of kindness: Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord, *she* shall be praised."

"A good rule for me, may not be good for other ministers," was a maxim of the Franklin sage. Many clergymen have attempted to follow his example in keeping aloof from their

Digitized by Google

parishes, but have not followed his previous example in obtaining that "prudent wife," who "is from the Lord." Until she was disabled by lameness, Mrs. Emmons made the visits which would otherwise have been expected from him. His confidence in her judgment and discreet benevolence, gave him habitual peace. She was an intellectual woman. She was skilled in theoretical and practical theology. She consecrated herself to the service of her God, in ministering to the wants of her husband and his parish. One who knew her in her house, has thus pictured her daily life:

"I remember well that old fashioned New England kitchen, where it used to be considered honorable for the 'lady of the house,' to preside, and where the family, after having engaged in 'doing up the work,' sat and sewed, knitted, spun, took their meals, etc. That great fireplace, with its huge backlog, forestick, and pile of smaller wood all ablaze at once in the capacious open chimney — the little wooden chair beside it, where the grandchild, who happened to be visiting there, was expected to sit, the great spinning wheel on one side of the room, and the goodly matron in an old-fashioned chair, with her crutches beside her, are brought distinctly before me. She had been a cripple ever since my recollection, but was not so until late in life. That slender, but finely moulded figure, that delicate complexion, those black eyes, still so bright and beautiful, and that Grecian profile all testify to her former beauty. There is a quiet dignity about that old lady in that antique chair, that shows she reigns in the parlor, as well as in the kitchen." "Housekeeping was with her an art, science, and an essential part of her religion. She understood it thoroughly. The ink and blacking that were used in the family; many other articles, also, that are usually purchased or else dispensed with, were manufactured at home. Even after she could walk only with the help of two crutches, she knew about the situation of every thing in her house, and has often said, that she could go, without a candle, in the darkest night and lay her hand upon the minutest article that might be needed in any part of the house.

"When 'Mr. Emmons,' as she called her husband, was not busy in writing his sermons, and when he had unfastened his door, the falling of the hook upon the study door being a well known sign that he was willing to see the members of his household, she would go in, and he would bring her chair and place it beside his own. The crutches were laid down, and she would listen with great interest, almost reverence, to whatever interested him. She sought to allay his excitements, and

Digitized by Google

soothe away his sorrows. She was calm in her temperament, foresaw the coming needs of her household and the parish, made timely arrangements to meet them, executed her plans with a quiet care and skill, diffused a spirit of tranquil diligence throughout her family circle, and aimed to make them all harmonious and cheerful. During the later years of her life when she had become lame and deaf, she did not ordinarily attend the public services of the sanctuary. When her little grandchildren stayed at home with her, she would request them to climb into a chair by the window, and watch his chaise as he rode to church, and tell her when the bell had done tolling; — then she would say, 'Your grandfather is now in the pulpit,' — and would commence praying for him, and the people to whom he was ministering."

### § 2. *His Conversation with Children.*

This was the *helpmeet* who cheered and sustained the pastor of Franklin during more than forty-nine years of his laborious life. His two sons and four daughters, also contributed to his daily solace. Some of them resembled their father in sprightliness and wit. Some of them were like their mother in gentleness and forethought. His domestic habits are well pictured out in the following memoranda from one of his grandchildren:

"My first recollections of him were while he was still engaged in his pastoral office. He had little time to devote to his grandchildren, but when he did allow them an interview, he gave to them, as he did to every thing, his whole mind; and so satisfied were they with the attentions they received, that the first thing they did, on arriving at his house, was to run to his study door, and ascertain if it were fastened. If it were not, they were allowed to enter without further ceremony. They knew that there was an old man sitting opposite the door, with no hair upon the top of his head, with long white locks flowing down the sides of his head and almost reaching to his shoulders, with a single breasted coat and skirted vest, and what were called small clothes, with little silver buckles upon his knees, and larger ones upon his shoes, and that he would look over his glasses, and challenge the juvenile intruders thus: 'Who comes here?' '*I*,' would be the invariable response of every little one. 'Well, who is I?' 'It is ——,' giving his or her name. 'Well who's ——?' He would continue these questions, till the little ones, not knowing what to answer, would climb into his lap, receive a hearty embrace, and end with a regular play, in which they invariably tried to excel him in quickness of motion. But I do not think any of his



Digitized by Google

grandchildren can ever remember a time, when they could move with equal celerity with him. But these playful strivings did not last long; and when he stopped, they knew that was an end of it till after dinner, when a short time was invariably devoted to them; and it would have been difficult for the beholder to say which enjoyed the play most, the grandparent or the child. If they were accompanied by their parents, when they visited him, they received a warm welcome, but the play was deferred till after dinner.

"In one of these playful hours, a grandchild passed her hand over his bald head very gently, saying, 'grandpa, your head is soft.'

"'What, what!' said he with apparent sternness, 'do you call my head *soft*?'

"'O!' said the terrified little one, 'I only meant it was *smooth*.'

"'Well, well,' he replied, 'that'll do better.'

"But there were times when they knew they must not try his study door; these were during the hours of his secret devotions. Often while playing in the yard, jumping from the fence, and climbing the trees, his form was visible to them, standing, as was his custom, before his chair, engaged in supplication. These involuntary glimpses through the window of grandfather at prayer, produced a deep impression upon their young minds.

"Every Saturday afternoon, he shaved, had his boots brushed, and prepared himself for the Sabbath. Sunset, he considered the commencement of holy time, and from that hour there was a marked change in his appearance. He wore no sanctimonious airs, but his countenance and demeanor were as one, who, in the sincerity of holy love and reverence for the Author of the day, did not think his own thoughts, or speak his own words. But the idea never occurred to me, that it was a gloomy day to him. His thoughts seemed to be in heaven and his conversation there. He thought it was wrong to sing on the Sabbath, except as an act of worship. If any of us went about the house singing on that day, he would reprove us. He considered it as irreverent and improper, as to go around praying audibly.

"After church, his grandchildren were allowed to sit a little while in the study, when he would either converse with them upon the importance of personal religion, hear them recite the catechism, or request them to read to him a sermon or a portion from the Bible, and often both. Sabbath evening, he was pleased to have them spend in the study, singing.

"He induced his grandchildren to open their hearts entirely to him. Secrets were confided to him, and though he lived till ninety-five, he never so far lost his memory as to betray their confidence. He had such a depth of experience, and such largeness of heart, that he could

Digitized by Google

sympathize with them when he could not approve of their course. It was really amusing, when he was receiving these confidential narrations, to see the tears of sympathy glitter in his eye, then the sudden change of his countenance, as he would exclaim, 'You were wrong there, never do so again!' Anon as the narrative proceeded, he would ejaculate 'That was right; stick to it!' If the continuation was getting ridiculous, 'pooh!' was his response; if humorous, he would laugh heartily, and in the end kindly sum up the case and give his advice."

He superintended the reading of his grandchildren while they resided with him. "He was careful not to confine their reading to sermons, but interspersed the writings of Goldsmith, Dean Swift, Pliny, Johnson, Addison, etc. 'The Vicar of Wakefield,' was the first volume of light literature he put into their hands. He would bring this out to them repeatedly, after an interval of a year or more, taking great pleasure in remarking the effect it had upon them, as their minds matured, and discussing the merits of the book at each reading. The perusal of these works never failed to open subjects for conversation, and call forth from him so much wit and wisdom, that the hours flew pleasantly and imperceptibly. Speaking of 'Gulliver's Travels,' he said, 'I frequently place that book in the hands of young people, to take the idea out of their minds that they know every thing.'

"If the children had any book for their own private reading, he drew the fact out of them, read the book himself, and then gave them his opinion of it, and his reason for the same. He was so candid, yet so keen, that they rather enjoyed than disliked this watchfulness, and ultimately cared to read few books, with the contents of which he was not familiar.

"He was very fond of drawing people out, and giving both children and adults, an opportunity to show what they knew, and testing their ability to defend themselves. At these times, he would allow them to dispute him with impunity, indeed he often obliged them to do so; but he always improved these occasions to teach them important truths.

"He had a faculty of knowing what his youthful visitors were about when out of his presence, without appearing to watch them.

"One evening as a young grandchild ran into the study, he exclaimed:

"'Here comes the little gambler.'

"'I'm not a gambler, Sir.'

"'Havn't you just been playing a game?'

"'Yes, Sir,' (and here the game was described by the child).

"'Then havn't you been gambling?'

"'No, Sir.'

"'Why not?'

Digitized by Google

"'Because I didn't use any cards, only corns."

"'People can gamble without cards, now why havn't you been gambling?"

"No answer.

"'Well, I'll tell you if you'll remember.' With one of his good-natured keen glances, that always seemed to burn into their minds what he wished them to recollect, he replied, 'Because it was entirely a game of skill. Any game which depends upon the throw of dice, or *chance* in any way, is wrong, and it is wicked to play it.'

"'Why is a chance game wicked?'

"'Because it is appealing to God on trifling occasions.'

"'Does the Bible say so?'

"'Yes.'

"'Where?'

"'The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposal thereof is of the Lord.' Prov. 16: 33.

"'I don't believe people ever think of God, when they throw dice.'

"'I don't suppose they do; neither do I suppose they often think of God when they swear, but that doesn't prevent their being profane.'"

He was fond of cultivating the dialectical skill of the children around him. He adopted Reinhard's plan of 'teaching much by telling nothing.' He stimulated the logical faculties, by questions and disputes. One of his granddaughters, when not more than six years old, came to him with a trouble weighing on her mind:

"A. B. says, that the moon is made of green cheese, and I do not believe it."

"Don't you believe it? Why not?"

"I know it isn't."

"But how do you know?"

"Is it, grandpa?"

"Don't ask me that question; you must find out for *yourself*."

"How can I find out?"

"You must study into it."

She knew enough to resort to the first of Genesis for information on the structure of the heavenly bodies, and after a truly Emmons search, she ran into the study:

"I've found out;—the moon is *not* made of green cheese, for the moon was made before cows were."[1]

[1] It may be remarked here, that of the preceding, as of many other anecdotes regarding Dr. Emmons, there have been given several versions, differing from each other in some particulars, but harmonizing in their spirit and substance.

Digitized by Google

§ 3. *Letters to his grand-daughters.*

In this playful manner did the enthusiastic logician regale himself, and stimulate the children who came around him, during the seventy years of his metaphysical study. The Christian tenderness as well as the confiding friendship with which the old divine treated his grand-daughters, may be inferred from the following letters, which he addressed to them in their early childhood:

"FRANKLIN, March 17, 1830.

"My Dear ——: I wish I were able to give you that good advice which you request me to give. But, however, I will do as well as I can. In the first place, I advise you to regard the advice, instructions, and even reproofs, of your dear mother and excellent grandmother. They have a right to advise, instruct and admonish you; and you are under the most endearing obligations to regard their lessons of wisdom and piety. You have been devoted to God, whose you are and whom you are bound to serve in childhood, in youth, and through every period of your life and existence. Read the Bible every day, and make it your constant and infallible guide. 'Acknowledge God in all your ways, and he will direct your paths.' True piety spreads a brighter glory around all the native beauties and acquired accomplishments in the female character than gold, or pearls, or costly array. Dress neatly and elegantly, but not extravagantly and vainly. Form no intimacy with the unprincipled and vicious. Make as many friends as you can without flattery or deception; but make very few confidants. If any become your causeless enemies, forgive and watch them. Make no display of your talents or attainments; for every one will clearly see, admire, and acknowledge them, so long as you cover them with the beautiful veil of modesty. I wish to keep up our mutual correspondence. It may not be unprofitable to you, and it will certainly be amusing and gratifying to your aged, lonely, and almost forgotten grandfather;

"N. EMMONS."

"FRANKLIN, May 5, 1830.

"My Dear ——: I am glad you are so able and ready to write to me. I am very fond of your letters and examine them very critically, and am highly gratified with every beauty and elegance I discover in them. . . . . If your grandfather and grandmother, and your dear mother, have set you good examples, they lay you under very



Digitized by Google

strong and endearing obligations to imitate their virtues and excellences. The more careful you are to tread in their steps, the more you will please them while they live, and the more you will honor them after they are dead. So long as you follow good example, you will set good example. Oh how much good you may do your dear, young, sprightly little sisters, if you take them by the hand and lead them in the paths of virtue and piety. You have all been devoted to God, in one of his sacred ordinances, and frequently been carried to the throne of divine grace by those whose hearts have been bound up in you. Dear ——, if you could give it under your hand and seal, in sincerity and truth, that you daily read the Bible, and daily give your heart to God, and commit yourself wholly and for ever to his disposal, it would be a great consolation to your affectionate grandfather;

"N. EMMONS."

"FRANKLIN, Feb. 5, 1832.

"My Dear ——: You are indeed my eldest grand-child, but it gives me greater joy to hope you are become a child of God. I will tell you that I have had peculiar and painful fears respecting your spiritual interests ever since you left us; for in one of the last times I conversed with you, I took notice of some expressions you let fall, which excited in my mind a strong suspicion that you were opposed to some of the most essential doctrines of the gospel, and leaning towards Unitarianism, or some other lax and dangerous errors. Under this impression, when I have daily carried all my grand-children to the throne of grace, I never failed to pray for you in particular. The moment, therefore, I read your letter, it darted into my mind that my particular petition for you had been graciously granted. But be that as it may, your account of your late views and exercises of heart, have given me great joy and consolation. If you have not mistaken and misrepresented the change you have experienced, I am ready to say that it looks like a genuine conversion. I wish however you would inform me how sudden your change was, and whether you were conscious of any extraordinary excitements of your natural passions, by any thing you heard or saw at the protracted meeting. . . . . If you are a real subject of grace and follower of Christ, you may be exposed to great trials from your former graceless intimates. They will neglect no opportunities, and stick at no alluring motives, to draw you astray from the path of duty. . . . . I hope you will write as soon as you receive this, and fully answer the queries of your affectionate grandfather;

"NATHANAEL EMMONS."

Digitized by Google

"FRANKLIN, April 29, 1830.

"My Dear Ellen: I thank you for your short, pretty, pertinent letter, and I hope you will send me another very soon, and give me a more particular account of your Sabbath schools, Bible classes, the schools you attend, and the studies you are pursuing. Now is the best season you will ever enjoy to get that learning which may make you reputable, useful, and happy in years to come. You are growing up in an evil day, when you will be exposed to all the vanities and snares which surround childhood and youth. Remember your Creator, and he will guide and guard you every day and everywhere. You ask for advice, and I will give you a little. Give yourself more to thinking than to reading, for reading without thinking will make you vain rather than knowing. Your teachers may give you words and ideas, but they cannot give you knowledge. You can derive real knowledge from no other source than from your own mental exertions. Learn to think steadily, closely and acutely upon every subject to which your instructors direct your attention. Do you seek knowledge while others cull flowers; for flowers will fade, but knowledge will endure. . . . . Oh, Ellen, if you and —— would only think how much pleasure your letters give me, you will not cease to write very frequently to your solitary grandfather;

"N. EMMONS."

"FRANKLIN, June 27, 1832.

"My Dear Ellen: I have long entertained the pleasing hope that you had become truly a child of God, and stood entitled to his gracious promise to pious youth: 'I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me.' This fond hope I am loath to give up, though the description which you have given of yourself, in your late letter, seems designed to weaken or destroy it. It is true, a false hope had better be given up than indulged. But it is very possible to give up a good hope, and young converts have often been led to give up such a hope. The reason is, they hope for too much at first. They are ready to imagine, that they shall continue to enjoy their warm feelings and bright prospects, without any interruption or diminution. This they have no right to expect; for God has never promised to give them the constant light of his countenance and manifestation of his love. He often hides his face from them and plunges them in darkness and doubts, to try their faith, and the sincerity of their submission to his amiable and awful sovereignty. I want to know, therefore, why you have given up your hopes. If it is because you have lost a sense of danger, or a realizing sense of the divine

Digitized by Google

presence, and of the great realities of the invisible world, your hopes may revive again; but if it be because you still love the world supremely, and cannot bear to take up the cross and to walk in the strait and narrow path to heaven, you ought to give up your hope, and immediately repent and give God the supreme affection of your heart.

"N. EMMONS."

### § 4. *His regular Habits at Home.*

A prominent, it may be the most prominent feature of Emmons's home life was its *regularity*. On *Monday* he did not crave a respite from work; but rose, at all seasons of the year, before the sun, and in the winter by daylight; first, read his Bible and rose for secret prayer, then attended family devotions, wound up his watch, took his frugal breakfast, went into his room as early as seven o'clock, sat down at his study table, having previously fastened his study door if he was unwilling to be interrupted in his work; about noon, if the sky were cloudless, he went to his study window, watched the meridian mark on the sill, compared his watch with the sun's time, ate his dinner, occasionally took a brief stroll over his farm, returned to his room, fastened the door if he was particularly occupied; resumed his chair at the desk; when the evening twilight came he supped, attended family prayer, returned to his room once more; put down again, if he was busy, the hook that defended him from intruders,[1] performed his private devotions, then resumed his hard work, retired to rest before ten o'clock, slept soundly; and on *Tuesday* went through the same routine, repeated it on *Wednesday*, and did not change it until *Saturday* afternoon, when he began to set his house in order for the Sabbath day, which was a high day. As the assiduous worker opened his book in the morning, he felt the habitual assurance that he could enjoy twelve hours for medita-

[1] Two young clergymen calling on Dr. Emmons, he said to them before they had taken their seat: "Do you see *that hook?* Both of you are young ministers, and if you have not such hooks on your study doors, I advise you to put them on without delay; for I am more indebted to *that hook* than to any man on earth; it has kept me free from many interruptions." On being told that some ministers might need the hook on the *outside* of the door, he replied, "Then let them put the hook on *both* sides; for if they need to be fastened *in*, they will surely need to fasten the world *out*."—*Rev. A. R. Baker's Memoir of Dr. Emmons, in Am. Quar. Reg.* Vol. XV. p. 125.

Digitized by Google

tion, uninterrupted by extraneous cares. It is true, that sometimes an incident in his family, or on his farm; sometimes a wedding or a funeral, in the town; sometimes a sick or troubled parishioner; sometimes a friend, or stranger from abroad; sometimes an ordination, or an advisory council, or a ministers' meeting, would interfere with his wonted toil; but on the other hand, he often spent fourteen or fifteen hours of the day over his books or manuscripts. No one could look about in his room, without knowing where the veteran's feet usually rested. The marks which they left upon the wainscot attracted so much attention from visitors, that he was obliged to procure a new panelling for one place in his room, which would suggest fewer queries.[1] He sat in the same study chair more than half a century, and when, about ninety years of age, he relaxed the severity of his mental toil, he fitly consented to abandon the old armchair for a new and easier one. Being asked, before this epoch, but after he was released from parochial duties, why he did not spend his leisure days in journeying, he replied, "I should like well enough to travel, if I could take my study with me. Habits are stubborn things; and I have become so accustomed to this room, to this desk, to this chair, and to this spot where I sit, that I do not feel at home anywhere else; I cannot talk anywhere else." He had a regular hour for conversation with his students and friends; and a peculiar movement of his body toward the study table, was equal to a sheriff's order that the room should be cleared, and he be left alone.

[1] "If Emmons, instead of wearing holes in the floor of his study, by his chair, where he sat 'a fixture for seventy years,' had worn holes in his shoes by walking sometimes among men, or going forth to breathe the fresh air of heaven, he would doubtless have saved his Scripture without losing any thing of his logic. So of the 'elect few' metaphysicians of kindred habits. Yet Professor Park calls their imaginative science 'practical' and 'common sense;' as if in a study that is never ventilated men could become any thing but idealists or mystics. — *President Nathan Lord's Letter to Dr. Dana on the Theology of New England,* p. 19. The same criticism may be pronounced upon Kant, Hegel, and the great majority of the German scholars, upon the monks in the Middle Ages, and upon many of the more ancient philosophers. We presume that the nonogenarian of Franklin would have thought better, and lived longer if he had followed Dr. Lord's suggestion. The remark of Professor Woods is accurate: "Dr. Emmons was not without faults; but his very faults and mistakes are edifying." Some of them show the worth of a good physical constitution to *start with* in life; also the native strength of that mind which knew so much of the world without mingling in its public routine.

Digitized by Google

The following illustrative incident is narrated by Dr. Ide:[1]

"A Mr. Brown, who had been a student of his and a boarder in his family, shortly after he began to preach, became deranged in mind, and fancied himself to be, as he said, 'in the other world.' Though perfectly beside himself in respect to this point, yet he would reason with great composure and strength upon other subjects, and in conversation with his friends would often attempt to reason on this also. While on a visit at the doctor's, sitting one day with the family in the parlor, he introduced his all absorbing subject, and began to name one fact after another, to prove that he was 'in the other world.' Some of those present queried with him on this subject. This led to a pleasant, but very animated debate, in which he defended his position with great ingenuity and earnestness. In the midst of the conversation, Dr. Emmons, having been out some time, came in, and, perceiving the object of the debate, sat down and listened to Brown's argument. As soon as Brown saw him seated with the family, he turned with an air of triumph to his opponents, and, pointing to the doctor, exclaimed, 'See, there is demonstration that this is the other world. Dr. Emmons is out of his study, and is now sitting here with the family; and you all know that no such thing ever happened in the old world.'

"Though it is not true that Dr. Emmons never sat with his family, yet so uniformly was he in his study when at home, and so well known were his habits in this respect, that the wit of the maniac had a peculiar point; and, while it produced a general burst of laughter, put an end to the debate."

When we reflect on this pertinacious course of study drawn out through a period of seventy years; when we remember that the still roads of his parish were not disturbed by the wheels of a regular mail-wagon, during the earlier years of his ministry; and that during two thirds of his long pastorate, the town did not receive a regular mail oftener than once a week, we are subdued, if not appalled by the remark of Emmons:

"Diversions, properly so called, have no foundation either in reason or religion. They are the offspring of a corrupt heart, and nourished by vicious example. God requires duties, and nothing but duties. And the duties which he requires are so various and so well adapted to our

[1] Memoir, pp. 60, 61.

Digitized by Google

present state, that in the performing of them we may find all the relaxation of body and mind which either can ever require."[1]

With the meaning which this severe student attached to the word, *diversion* (amusement for the sake of mere frivolous pleasure), his remark is true; but whether true or false, it illustrates his power of endurance, his broad capacities, the admirable fitness of his temperament to the pursuits of a logician and philosopher. Surely a man who lived so long and toiled so much, must have written something fitted to excite our curiosity and teach us wise lessons.

### § 5. *His Precision at Home.*

Intimately connected with the regularity, was the precision of all his movements at home. "*Precisely so*," writes his colleague, Dr. E. Smalley,[2] "*precisely so*, must the wood be laid on the fire, and the ready hearth-brush must almost instinctively do its duty in keeping dust and ashes in their places. At *such* a time must the wood-box be replenished; the faithful servant must know enough to enter that room with head uncovered; and so devoted was the sage to his own calling, so much did he depend on others to do what belonged to other departments, that he would often playfully say, 'I cannot do without a servant twenty-four minutes.'" If he heard a knock at his door, the precise man would first put his book or manuscript under the green baize which covered his study-table; — seldom did a visitor see any volume or paper lying on that unspotted baize; the entire room, in his busiest hours, bore no appearance of a laboratory; — and then the student would admit his guests. They always found him scrupulously neat in his person and attire. His three-cornered hat was hanging on the peg appropriated for it. Every chair was in its place, every book on its shelf, except the one under the baize.

Rev. Dr. Harris of Dunbarton, N. H., once related the following incident to the writer of this memoir:

[1] Original Edition of Collected Works, Vol. II. p. 65.
[2] Sprague's Annals, I. p. 704.

Digitized by Google

"Having served as a soldier in the Revolutionary war, I went to read theology with Dr. Emmons. As I was expecting to remain several months a member of his family, he felt that he might be more free with me than with other strangers, and he wished to lose no time in training me to habits of order. After I had taken my seat with him by the fire, a brand fell upon the hearth; and as I was the younger man, and withal the pupil, I arose and put the brand in its place, but put the tongs on the left of the jamb. The Doctor instantly removed the tongs to the right of the jamb. In a few minutes more, the fire fell down the second time; I rectified the matter, and put the tongs again on the left of the fire place. The Doctor rose again, and put them on the right. Soon the brands fell the third time; and as the Doctor's movements had appeared to me somewhat singular, I determined to find out what they meant. Having adjusted the brands, therefore, I placed the tongs, designedly, along with the shovel at my left. My teacher then arose, and having corrected my third error, looked significantly in my face, and said: 'My young friend, as you are going to stay with me, I wish to tell you, now, that I keep my shovel at the left of my fire, and my tongs at the right.' From this incident, I learned one of the most useful maxims of a theologian; never to put on the left hand what belongs to the right; never to place together what ought to be kept separate; always to discriminate between things that differ; and to be accurate in small things as well as great."

In his punctiliousness of habit, Dr. Emmons was a representative character. Many of the choice men among the old divines of New England were methodical in all their ways. Dr. Jonathan Edwards, when a boy, felt obliged to leave his shoes in a particular place over night; and when once, by accident, he forgot this duty, he left his bed and rectified the disorder. Dr. Hopkins of Newport, could not sleep unless he knew precisely where his gloves were. So there was not an article in Emmons's room but he could find it if he were blindfold. The fathers were regular in their movements. Dr. West would come home from Hartford on the Saturday of election week, not Friday but Saturday, and would turn the corner to go up from the plain to the hill where he lived, at half after ten o'clock in the morning. For the winding up of his watch he had his fixed time. He studied in one place, had certain regular movements in his study-chair, left two cavities as the

Digitized by Google

impress of his feet upon the floor, and in many other respects was conformed to the same model with Dr. Emmons.

### § 6. *His Temperance.*

Another feature of Emmons's home-life was his temperance. We read that "Schiller, during his hours of composition, kept at his side a bottle of champagne or Rhenish wine, or a cup of strong coffee. Horace Walpole wrote usually from ten to two o'clock at night, always having strong coffee by him. Sir William Jones drank a great deal of coffee to support him in his nocturnal studies. Baron de Grimm states that Voltaire, a few days prior to his death, with his characteristic activity and enthusiasm, attended the rehearsal of the Academy, and insisted on the production of a new and important edition of their dictionary. To this project, many objections were started, which he resolved to obviate in an elaborate discourse. To strengthen himself for the task, he swallowed a prodigious quantity of strong coffee, and then continued to work for upwards of twelve hours without intermission. This independent effort brought on a painful inflammation of his system. For the purpose of relieving the pain, he swallowed, with his usual impatience, a large quantity of laudanum. The consequence was that he fell into a lethargy from which he never entirely recovered."

In contrast with these authors, the subject of this Memoir very seldom drank any liquid more stimulating than weak tea. His usual beverage at supper was milk. In the evening he often drank the new milk before it was cool.[1] Thus innocent was his diet. Unless friends from abroad were at his table, he adhered to a childlike regimen. He studied the indications of *nature* in the treatment of his physical system, and he meant to eat and drink what an unadulterated taste would crave, and what the God of Nature had most obviously provided. He was

[1] It has been often and truly remarked, that the Franklin divine kept *himself* out of his sermons. His use of the first personal pronoun was very infrequent. Still, his discourses betray, sometimes, his individual tastes, and remind those who knew him, of his private habits. There are signs of his *milk-diet* in his noted sermon on 1 Corinthians 3: 2.



Digitized by Google

nearly as averse as Napoleon to large doses of medicine. He was no less abstemious than he was uniform, at his meals. President Edwards was wont to leave the table for his study before his family had concluded their repast, and would return to dismiss the table, when they had satisfied their wants. "Through life I have risen from my meals with as good an appetite as I had when I sat down," was the remark of Dr. Emmons when he had passed his ninetieth year. He seldom uttered a word, and wasted but few minutes in reasoning, with regard to his repasts; *he ate what was set before him*, if it were not unwholesome; and he once summed up his dietetic rules in these words: "I do not ascribe my long-continued health to any whimsical care of my diet. What has hurt me, I have not eaten. I have avoided stimulating liquids, have seldom drank coffee unless it were half milk and half sugar, have been always temperate in the use of simple food, and have secured good sleep." But his temperance was a general virtue, extending to all his appetites and passions; his securing good sleep was but one index of his character, of his calmness, patience, resignation, freedom from exposure both physical and moral; his spirit reclining on the bosom of eternal truth, while he rested his head upon his pillow at night. His long life was a Providential result of his descent from hardy yeomen, of his early labor on the Millington farm, of his rational but not squeamish care for plain light meals, of his regular ways, but, above all, of that disinterested and confiding submission which he practised first and preached afterwards.

It is an interesting fact that the celebrated temperance reformation which overspread the community after the subject of this Memoir had become an octogenarian, found him as it left him. From the beginning to the end of the year, it modified scarcely one drop of the liquid which he drank. His habits of drinking, as of dressing, remained the same whether other men did or did not come up to them, or down to them. "Old people," says Dr. Ide, "especially when they have arrived at their eightieth or ninetieth year, are generally afraid of innovations, and disposed to doubt the utility of modern improvements. But Dr. Emmons at this great age, hailed the temperance reformation as a harbinger of good, and cheerfully gave his name to be enrolled

Digitized by Google

with those who were pledged against the use of ardent spirit as a drink. It gave him great pleasure to see, near the close of his life, the people generally embracing substantially the same views on this subject. which he had entertained all his days."[1]

### § 7. *His Use of Tobacco.*

The truth, however, must be told. When a visitor entered the room of the celebrated theologian Brettschneider, he saw arranged on the study wall of the veteran scholar, twenty-seven tobacco pipes. So when a stranger entered the room of Doctor Emmons, he detected the signs that this apostle of temperance had not attained perfection. In common with the lawyers and clergymen of his time, he had chewed the "meditative quid." His indulgence had never been immoderate; still after he had lived ninety years he became convinced that it was wrong, and he *determined* at *once* to abstain from it. An eminent physician *urged* him not to interfere with a habit so long indulged, as the consequences of its discontinuance at his great age might be unpleasant, and it was the duty of people greatly advanced in years to make their last days as comfortable as possible, for the sake of their friends. He therefore continued the use of the weed, though he deplored the habit, and spoke of its evil tendency.

The report has been started that his conformity with this once common practice of literary men, resulted in shortening his life. His example has been held up as a warning to youthful scholars, who might be cut off from their earthly existence at the age of ninety-five, unless they abstained from a habit so fatal to longevity. There is, perhaps, more reason for the warning than might appear at a superficial glance. It is a fact that Dr. Emmons died not of old age, but of a cancerous affection, which may possibly have been exacerbated by any unnatural indul-

[1] Memoir, p. 56. At the very *first* proposal of the temperance pledge, Emmons did not admire it. He loved his father and mother, and they had joined no Temperance Society. He was disinclined to novel schemes, and he loved *individuality* as well as antiquity. "I have been abstinent without a pledge," he remarked in 1826 to a young friend who was boasting of the temperance movement. Soon, however, the temperate patriarch adopted the new method, which in fact was the substance of his old teachings.

Digitized by Google

gence.[1] His own favorite theory was, that 'not one in a thousand or a million of the human race reaches the bounds of life which nature has set;' that 'the course of nature may extend these bounds an hundred and twenty, or thirty, or forty, or fifty years; and *perhaps would always* do so, if it were not obstructed' by some incident interfering with the laws of our physical constitution. It was interesting to hear him speak of an octogenarian, as not having lived to the full age of man, but as being "*deprived*" of the normal "*residue* of his years."

### § 8. *Seeming Tameness of his Life.*

Some have imagined that the still retreat of Emmons was one of tedious monotony. His days and nights must have been languid and dull, it is thought, and he must have hybernated in a comatose condition for about three quarters of a century. But such persons forget his brisk intellectual impulses, and the active genius of his creed. He was always amid stirring scenes; for he saw angels encamping on the plains of Franklin, and hourly ascending or descending to or from the skies. Was an infant born in the still parish? This was not a mere terrene occurrence. "The birth of every immortal soul," he teaches, "is an event highly interesting to angels, though often disregarded by those who are still more interested."[2] Did a good man die in the quiet town? The habitual and thrilling belief of the pastor was, that "angels are the constant guardians and protectors of good men." He writes: "It is very probable, that every saint has his guardian angel, who attends him through life, takes care of his departed spirit, and conducts him safely to the mansions Christ has gone before to provide for him."[3] "It is a gloomy thought to thinking minds, that we must die alone as to our fellow mortals; but it is a consoling thought, that if we are friends of God, his holy angels shall take the charge of our souls and guide them safely to the mansions of bliss. However we may forget them in life and health, their presence and aid are

[1] A distinguished physician who knew Dr. Emmons well, pronounces the opinion, that his use of tobacco was too moderate to affect his health injuriously.

[2] Orig. Ed. Vol. VI. p. 103.

[3] Ibid. Vol. III. pp. 371–373.

Digitized by Google

very desirable when we come to exchange worlds."[1] It was a bright scene, when this keen-sighted pastor rode to the house of a dying parishioner, and with the quick eye of faith beheld the angel standing and waiting to convoy the exulting spirit from this low earth. He believed it most consonant to the analogy of things, to suppose that angels "are clothed in either terrestrial or celestial bodies," "light, ethereal, transparent and splendid vehicles," and that "there is but one absolutely incorporeal spirit" in the universe.[2] This intellectual pastor felt no drowsiness amid the tranquil valleys through which he rode, for he was in a daily contest with principalities and powers of wickedness. "If every heir of salvation," he remarks, "has a good angel to attend him, as the scripture seems to intimate, why should it be thought absurd to suppose that there is an evil angel, who occasionally, if not constantly, attends every impenitent sinner on the face of the earth?"[3] This vigilant pastor found not a moment for torpidity, for his great doctrine of Providence pointed him to the hand of the Almighty moving in every part of the serene parish, the eye of God intently fixed on every man and child and lamb and leaf. The world was all aglow and astir with the Great Spirit. "As all the creatures of God are always open to his all comprehensive view, so he regards them all with equal attention and impartial affection."[4] Therefore no event can be "small and trifling." "The gaggling of geese once saved the city of Rome from destruction by the Gauls. Fabius, the Roman General, who by his wisdom and valor drove Hannibal, the greatest warrior then in the world, from the Roman empire, was suffocated by a single hair in a draught of milk."[5] The minutest accident results from the eternal plan and the present activity of God. Who then can be listless? One of Emmons's favorite sermons is entitled, "Constant Preparations making for the Day of Judgment." His exciting life was passed in the spirit of that sermon. He saw in his own parish that "God is preparing all things fast as possible" for the great day. "Fast as possible," that was the chosen word of the

[1] Works, Present Edition, Vol. II. pp. 499, 500.
[2] Ibid. II. p. 464.
[3] Ibid. II. p. 534.
[4] Ibid. II. p. 482.
[5] Ibid. II. p. 481.



Digitized by Google

rapid thinker. "Though God moves all the wheels of nature as fast as they can be moved, yet ages must roll away before he can finish his great work, and prepare all intelligent creatures for the retributions of eternity." "Yet he neither alters his purpose, nor remits his operations, but constantly employs the whole creation in preparing things for the day of judgment." Therefore he infers: "Every duty we perform has some influence in preparing ourselves or others for the great day of retribution; and for this reason we ought to esteem every duty assigned us as a *real privilege*." It is "a duty and *privilege* to be aiding and assisting, or as the Scripture more properly terms it, to be *workers together* with God, in his preparations for the day which shall bring to a happy close his eternal purpose in all his works. It is a *privilege* to ministers of the Gospel, to have the care and instruction of immortal souls, and to be employed as instruments of preparing them for their appearance before their Supreme Judge."[1] "Fast as possible" Emmons beheld all things in his tranquil precinct, tending to this grand centre, the final unfolding of the Divine plan. He saw that "the Lord of hosts is far more zealous to attain the object of his supreme affection [in the great concluding scene], than any of mankind ever were to attain the objects of their highest wishes." Emmons "walked" with God. He "worked" with God. He was "zealous" with God. He needed no more excitement. He was a spiritual man. No pastor has been more wakeful for so long a time.

[1] Works, Present Edition, Vol. III. pp. 832–843. See Original Edition, Vol. V pp. 619–627.

Digitized by Google

## CHAPTER VII.

### HIS PERSONAL FRIENDS, ASSOCIATES, AND CORRESPONDENTS.

#### § 1. *His Earlier Friends.*

"I VALUE my friends amongst the richest blessings of life, and receive every mark of their friendship with the most grateful sensibility. I had almost forgotten you, and supposed you had quite forgotten me, until your unexpected letter which breathed a most friendly and fraternal spirit, convinced me of my unhappy error. I have lived to bury some, and to lose more, of those whom I numbered and embraced as friends; and of all the evils I have ever suffered, this is truly the greatest.

'Poor is the friendless master of a world;
A world in purchase of a friend is gain.'

"There is nothing brings so great a gloom over my mind, in my darkest hours, as the thought of outliving all my friends. But in more lucid moments, I consider the loss of friends as a happy circumstance, to wean me from the world, to which I am too much attached, and to reconcile me to the thought of death which may, through grace, put me in possession of perfect and ever-growing friendship."

These are the familiar words addressed by Emmons to one of his early associates. It was his maxim that "a man is made by his friends." He was ever frank and cordial in acknowledging the influence of his early companions, particularly of his eminent college mates and classmates upon him.[1] He derived an untold advantage from his intimacy with so many pupils of Edwards, Hopkins, and Bellamy. He learned from them with signal *exactness*, the peculiar views and aims of the elder Edwards. His character and history cannot be understood,

[1] See pp. 26–29, above.



Digitized by Google

without a knowledge of the men who formed with him a school for mutual instruction.

Having spent his youth under the shadow of Yale College, and under the influence of her alumni, he felt the change of atmosphere when he moved his residence to the vicinity of the Arminian College at Cambridge, and the Baptist College of Providence. The town of Franklin was on the border line between Massachusetts and Rhode Island; and the good men of Connecticut had once a low opinion of Rhode Island, a State which was not baptized in its infancy. He had left the neighborhood of Dr. Smalley whom he revered as an intellectual giant, and of Dr. Hart whose polished manners he admired, and of Dr. Strong of Hartford, whom he loved as a young brother. He paid them frequent visits, however, and received from them many tokens of regard. He conducted several rather severe controversies with Smalley, but always spoke of him with a reverent, and even childlike affection. His friends, Dr. Strong and Dr. Hart,[1] were active in turning the attention of young men to Emmons as their theological teacher, and in securing his contributions to the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine. Dr. Bellamy in his old age, paid one visit to Dr. Emmons, and preached for him one Sabbath.

### § 2. *His Later Friends.*

In removing from the circle of his old associates, however, Emmons came into new relationships that were very dear to him. He often entertained at his house that revered father in Israel, Dr. Samuel Hopkins of Newport; and the private memoranda of Hopkins contain allusions to certain interesting disputes on baptism between the aged and the youthful divine. Dr. Stephen West of Stockbridge, was also drawn into the society of Emmons, and found in him a man having striking resemblances to himself. It was through the incitement of Dr. West, that Emmons was induced to issue some of his first

[1] To a young candidate who applied for theological instruction to Dr. Hart, he returned the answer: "I advise you by all means to pursue your studies with Mr. Emmons of Franklin. He knows every rope in the ship."

Digitized by Google

publications. The two friends criticized each other's sermons with confiding frankness.

After the second marriage of Emmons, he became intimate with that energetic and eloquent theologian, Dr. Samuel Austin of Worcester, and still more intimate with Dr. Samuel Spring of Newburyport. Two independent and self-reliant theologians were never more emphatically *brothers*, than were the Franklin and the Newburyport divines.[1] They were complements to each other; the former persevering in study, the latter persevering in action. Emmons once remarked to me: "When Dr. Spring died, I felt as if I had lost my right hand. We thought together, felt together, acted together." When bereaved of this enterprising coadjutor, Emmons wept. His grief did not always express itself in tears, but this was the grief of David for Jonathan. He deviated from his ordinary routine so far as to preach a sermon on the bereavement to his own people. In that sermon he said:

"The late removal of Dr. Spring from the stage of action is much to be lamented, not only by his family, his friends, his own church and congregation, but by the pious public at large. He was a brave and faithful soldier of Jesus Christ. He fought a good fight, and he kept the faith to his dying day. No minister was more correct in his religious sentiments. And few ministers of late, have done more to promote the cause of truth. He not only faithfully discharged his ministerial duties to his own flock, but he was one of the first members, and the last President of the Massachusetts Missionary Society. He was one of the first movers and promoters of the Theological Seminary at Andover.

[1] In his Journal for 1791, Dr. Ashbel Green of Philadelphia, speaks of Dr. Spring thus: "July 5th. Went to Mr. Spring's, who is a new divinity man, as I am informed, of nearly the highest order. He has, however, too much good sense to run into all the rashness and violence of the system, and is too well acquainted with human nature, not to know that it must be won and not driven into religious opinions. He appears to have studied closely, and to have acquired a considerable share of information, especially on religious subjects. His knowledge, however, as it lies principally in the track of new divinity, so it seems to be mostly directed to its advancement. After all, and better than all, he appears to be an excellently pious and godly man, desirous to promote true religion, and disposed to rejoice in its advancement. He treated me with as much friendliness as I have ever met with, and I am to preach for him on my return, when I expect we shall have (what we have not yet had), a disputation on new divinity."—*Memoir of Dr. Green*, pp. 220, 221.

Digitized by Google

He was one of the first movers and promoters of the Foreign Missionary Society, and the vice-president of it. And all these offices he filled with fidelity and dignity. But alas! this standard-bearer is fallen, and the friends of Zion have rarely, if ever, had more reason to lament the decease of any minister, than the death of Dr. Spring. There is reason to fear that the breach will not be healed, and the wide chasm his death has made, will not be filled up; but the cause of truth will be greatly weakened. This I fear and feel."[1]

Among the friends of Dr. Emmons in his immediate vicinity, are the following who are commemorated in Dr. Sprague's Annals:[2] Rev. Habijah Weld of Attleborough, Rev. Dr. Prentiss of Medfield,[3] Rev. Jason Haven, and Rev. Dr. Bates of Dedham, Presidents Manning, Maxcy, Messer, and Professor Calvin Park of Providence, R. I.,[4] Rev. Nathaniel Howe of Hopkinton, Rev. Dr. Crane of Northbridge, and Rev. Dr. Strong of Randolph. There were two of his clerical neighbors, however, to whom he formed an early and a very peculiar attachment. The following appendant notice of them will disclose the quickening influences which Emmons early enjoyed.

### Rev. David Sanford, of Medway.

This gentleman was named[5] in honor of David Brainerd, and was a great admirer of that pious missionary. He was an intimate friend of Dr. Bellamy and Dr. Hopkins, with both of whom he studied theology.

[1] Original Edition, Vol. VII. pp. 503, 504.

[2] There were several intimate friends of Emmons who are still among the living, and who contributed largely to his enjoyment. Among these are Rev. Thomas Williams, whose keen wit, rich imagination, and acute discernment, were a source of unfailing interest to the solitary student; also Rev. Dr. Ide of Medway, and Rev. Dr. Burgess of Dedham.

[3] Dr. Prentiss was the only clergyman except Emmons who retained the old fashion of clerical dress, as late as 1814. After his decease his three cornered hat was presented to Emmons. The two neighbors were not at all harmonious in their theological views and tendencies, but were personally attached to each other. The old church difficulty in Medway, which had disturbed the peace of the town for thirty-two years, was settled by the intervention of Dr. Emmons as a friend of the more Orthodox, and of Dr. Prentiss as a friend of the more Liberal contestants. *See Rev. Luther Wright's Century Sermon*, p. 13.

[4] Dr. Messer, although not a Trinitarian, often spoke of Emmons with great reverence, and sought opportunities to converse with him on theological topics.

[5] The father of Mr. Sanford was a protector of the Separatists in Connecticut, and made his house an asylum for them in their persecutions.

Digitized by Google

He was also a brother-in-law, and the spiritual son, of Dr. Hopkins.[1] He was once a stirring chaplain in the Revolutionary war. He was a natural orator. He produced the same effect in Eastern Massachusetts, which Dr. John M. Mason produced in New York City. Dr. Emmons has said of him:

"I know no man of any profession, in the circle of my acquaintance, who surpassed him in natural eloquence. He was able to move any passion which he wished to move, whether love or hatred, hope or fear, joy or sorrow. He knew every avenue to the human heart, and could make the deepest impressions upon it." "I never heard a man preach," said Emmons to Dr. Hawes, "who was capable of making a more powerful impression on an audience than Mr. Sanford."

Dr. Hawes, of Hartford, once a parishioner of this eloquent divine, gives the following account of him:

"He was fluent beyond measure, and not only never wanted for a word, but rarely, if ever, failed to get the right word. His voice was susceptible of every variety of inflection, and could wake into a tempest or sink to a zephyr, — could rouse, or agitate, or melt, with equal ease and without the least apparent effort."[2]

Dr. Emmons often sharpened his own mind by collision with his friend Sanford. He differed from him radically in politics, and very seriously on some doctrines of religion. Mr. Sanford, although in the main a Hopkinsian, yet believed that the atonement of Christ consisted in mere active obedience, and that the penalty for the first offence was mere spiritual death. "I am not afraid to take hold of you in private, but I dread your gripe in public," was a remark of Emmons to this Hopkinsian

[1] For an account of his remarkable conversion and his life, see Memoir of Hopkins, pp. 60–62.

[2] Dr. Sprague's Annals, Vol. II. p. 52. The wonderful power of Mr. Sanford's countenance and tones, is illustrated in the following incident:

"During the Revolutionary war, he was called to preach at a place where a company of soldiers had encamped, and whose commander, attracted by his reputation as a popular speaker, marched his men into the galleries of the meeting-house in which Mr. Sanford was to hold his service. While he was speaking, a board by which a shattered window had been replaced, fell, and the exercises were somewhat interrupted by the noise and confusion of putting it back. By a repetition of the occurrence, he was interrupted a second and a third time, when, rushing to seize the board, he cried out to the soldiers, — 'Let that board alone.' The officer, on retiring, being asked how he liked the preacher, replied, — 'Pretty well, but I should have liked him better if he had not sworn so.' 'Sworn, Captain, I heard no oaths.' 'Yes, he said,' (here repeating a tremendous oath), 'let that board alone.' 'You certainly mistake — he uttered no oath whatever.' 'Well,' replied the Captain, 'if he did not say the words, he looked them.' Hence, in after life, when his countenance was perceived to indicate dangerous displeasure, some anxious good-natured brother would tell him not to swear so."—Sprague's Annals, Vol. II. pp. 50, 51.

Digitized by Google

Apollos. But while candidly acknowledging the superiority of Mr. Sanford in oratorical address, the modest metaphysician was severe in his censure upon some devices of his friend. I have heard him narrate with expressions of stern disapproval, the following incident, substantially as it has been given by Dr. Hawes:[1]

"On some public occasion, it fell to Mr. Sanford to preach immediately after Mr. N——, of A——, who was a very able man, and withal had fine pulpit talents. Mr. N—— preached with remarkable power, and Mr. Sanford was not a little discomforted at the idea of following him. He rose in the pulpit, announced his text, stammered, and seemed unable to proceed. He apologized to his audience for his bad beginning, and begged them to allow him to go back and commence anew. He did so, but his hesitating manner continued, till the audience really began to drop their heads in anticipation of a mortifying failure. When he had got them to this point, he made a mighty effort and swept by father N——, as it was said, with incomparable majesty, preaching a sermon which filled his audience with surprise and admiration. It was shrewdly hinted afterwards, that there was some policy in the awkward commencement, and that he purposely let the audience down as low as he could, for the sake of raising them as high as he could."

This incident was an altogether exceptional part of Mr. Sanford's history, as he was eminent for his enthusiasm in the cause of truth and virtue. The manner of his death illustrated the habits of his life.

"On the evening of the third of October, 1809, after he had retired to his lodgings, while upon his knees at his bedside praying for his church and people, he received the intimation that his work was done. He was there in that act and in that posture, smitten with a paralysis from which he never recovered. He lingered in circumstances of great weakness and distress, until the seventh of April, 1810, when he fell asleep in Jesus, in the 73d year of his age, and 37th of his ministry. When the summons came, he was found watching, engaged in his proper work, presenting his people to God, imploring for them his blessing."[2]

### Rev. Samuel Niles, of Abington.

The clergyman whom Mr. Sanford outshone in the above named way, was Mr. Niles, another bosom friend of Emmons, to whose rousing words and magnetic influence the Franklin recluse owed a large debt. This truly majestic man was a classmate at Princeton College with Dr. Samuel Stanhope Smith, and a theological pupil of Dr. Bellamy. When it is said that Dr. Emmons was punctual and regular in his hour of retiring

[1] Sprague's Annals, Vol. II. pp. 52, 53.

[2] A lofty marble monument has been recently erected to the honor of this faithful pastor in West Medway, Mass., where he was buried fifty years ago. The passage to which this note refers, is extracted from Dr. Ide's Address at the completion of the monument.

Digitized by Google

to sleep,[1] it must be understood that the arrival of his brother Niles at the Franklin parsonage, was a signal that he was to spend the entire day, and not seldom the entire night in earnest colloquy, if not in sharp discussion. He once remarked that he considered Mr. Niles equal, if not superior, in metaphysical acumen to Dr. Hopkins, Dr. Edwards, Dr. West, or Dr. Spring. The following letter, from Emmons to Hon. Aaron Hobart, of Bridgewater, Mass., dated Sept. 11, 1832, illustrates his reverence for this vigorous thinker:

"The Father of Spirits endowed Mr. Niles with superior intellectual and reasoning powers. I rarely was acquainted with a man who, in my opinion, possessed a stronger or clearer mind, and who could penetrate deeper into the most abstruse subjects of mental philosophy, as well as of natural and revealed religion. He had a clear and profound knowledge of the truth, connection, harmony, and consistency of the first principles and essential doctrines of Christianity, which qualified him to become one of the most instructive and powerful preachers I ever heard. His sermons were not superficial, but full of great and weighty truths, which not only commanded the serious and eager attention of his hearers, but deeply impressed their hearts and consciences. No man, whether learned, or unlearned, whether a lover or hater of truth, could sit under his preaching with levity or indifference. His grave and dignified appearance in the pulpit, in connection with his truly genuine eloquence, could hardly fail to strike the largest audience with awe and reverence, and to render him one of the most popular preachers of his day. He was intimately acquainted with human nature, and could render himself agreeable in his common intercourse with all classes of people; but he was more especially entertaining in private circles, by the flashes of his wit, and his curious, amusing, striking, and pertinent anecdotes. He could, however, turn with peculiar ease and propriety from social to the most serious subjects, and converse very seriously and instructively upon doctrinal and experimental religion. On all proper occasions, his speech was seasoned with the salt of Divine grace, and suited to strengthen the weak, console the disconsolate, and animate the most growing Christian. I will only add one more rare and shining trait in his character. He was one of the most undisguised, frank, and faithful friends I ever knew. He was an Israelite indeed."

At the installation of Mr. Niles's successor at Abington, Emmons alluded to the "late deceased and beloved pastor," as "one of the most luminous, the most penetrating, the most instructive, the most energetic, the most fervent and successful preachers of the present day."

### § 3. *Correspondence with Dr. Emmons.*

The epistles of the early Hopkinsians to each other were in the main, theological treatises. A few of them, however, were letters and not sermons. The following communications to and from the friends of Emmons, illustrate the deferential style

[1] See p. 104, above.



Digitized by Google

of their intercourse with him. We may catch a pretty clear reflection of those "ministerial days," from the letters of Emmons's sterling friend, Governor Treadwell.[1] His correspondence with Emmons, having been long discontinued, was resumed in 1796. Then he writes: "Having dispatched the business which announced this letter, permit me to remark the pleasure I feel in the recollection of our former habits of intimacy; my regret at their having been so long almost totally interrupted, partly by imperious circumstances, and partly, I fear, from inattention; my desire that they may be resumed as far as practicable, and the high esteem and regard with which I still, and trust shall ever, remain, your friend and obedient servant." Among his subsequent letters are the following:

"FARMINGTON, Nov. 10, 1798.

"SIR: — On the second instant I received your letter and sermon with much delight. The memory of a friend of my youth rushed upon me with full vigor. Our intercourse with each other has unhappily been, ever since we entered upon active life, almost wholly discontinued. I have, however, had much the advantage of you, in that I have been able to maintain a sort of converse with you, very pleasing and edifying, in your writings. These emanations of your mind have enabled me to mark, as I have done with much satisfaction, your progress in knowledge and refinement. I know not how it happens, except it be from union of heart and our former intimate connection, that I seem to feel myself honored by your rising reputation. I have long set you down, as one of those happy ones who are fast advancing towards the perfection of their nature. I have only to say, Go on and prosper. I ardently wish and pray that I may bear you company in the happy course, though with unequal steps. Your letter is very obliging, and though your expressions are partial in my favor, they discover, I think, the heart of a friend; for I know your sincerity. For myself, I have got along hitherto in life attended with many infirmities and much weakness; which, though thorns in the flesh, I sometimes almost rejoice in, because they evince most forcibly to my mind, the power and grace of Almighty God in my support. I am an ambitious man; but yet I can truly say, I have more feared promotion than I have either desired or sought it. It brings more cares and duties than comforts. It is not in itself desirable, it is only so as a means of usefulness. It has been pregnant with evil to many, I may say to most, who have attained it. It may be so to me, but my comfort is a hope that the same invisible hand which has

[1] This classmate of Emmons was "a representative to the General Assembly [of Connecticut] from his native town [Farmington,] nine years; a member of the Council twenty-four years, for eleven of which he held the place of Lieutenant-Governor, and one and a half years Governor [of Connecticut]; having, in the mean time been twenty-six years judge of the court of probate, three years judge of the County Court, twenty years a judge in the Supreme Court of Errors, and nineteen years one of the Corporation of Yale College; and having sustained numerous other and important relations to the State." — *Prof. Olmsted's Memoir*, in Am. Quar. Reg. Vol. XV. p. 248.

Digitized by Google

conducted me, unconscious of the issue, to my present situation, will not fail to afford that aid and support which may be necessary for me.

"I am, Sir, your cordial friend
"and humble servant,
"J. TREADWELL.'

"Rev. Nathanael Emmons."

"FARMINGTON, July 11, 1800.

"SIR:—I took an early opportunity of acknowledging the receipt of your letter of the twenty-second of October, 1798, and of your sermon accompanying it. I trust you received mine in return, but of this I am uncertain. It would be grateful to me to maintain a constant intercourse by letter with a friend so sincerely loved and respected; but our situation renders this difficult. If our early friendship was useful, a renewal of it at an advanced period of life, bringing with it the experience of years, it might be expected, would be more so; sure I am, if it were not, the fault would be my own. My life has not been greatly variegated by sudden reverses; unexpected events have taken place; still, as a whole, they present a kind of uniform appearance. I have hitherto, through the providence of Him who governs the storm and the tempest, sailed upon a calm sea; but unless I soon arrive in port, I may chance to sail Mr. Jefferson's tempestuous sea of liberty, with the rest of my shipmates. A systematic attack on religion and government, characterizes the day. The effects already produced, are dreadful; but there is too much reason to fear they are but the beginnings of sorrows. The moral state of the world seems to justify this apprehension. Liberty I love; but it is that liberty which results from the most perfect subjection of every soul to the empire of law, and not that which is sought by *illuminees* and atheists. I have not time to enlarge. Accept this scrawl as a mark of my respect, and as a kind of general map of the present state of my mind, and believe me to be,

"Your affectionate friend and humble servant,
"JOHN TREADWELL.

"Rev. Nathanael Emmons."

The following letter, acknowledging a literary honor, reminds us that there was once a time when a Doctorate of Divinity had a meaning:

"FRANKLIN, December 24, 1798.

"SIR:—I lately received your favor of the 25th of August, in which you politely inform me, that the honorable and venerable Corporation of the University over which you preside, were pleased at the last Commencement, to confer upon me the *degree of Doctor in Divinity*. This unexpected and unmerited testimony of the approbation of great and good men, justly demands my respectful acknowledgments. I have habitually entertained a peculiar partiality in favor of Dartmouth College, ever since I attended its first Commencement, when it was devoutly consecrated to the honor and service of the great Head of the church by your pious and venerable father. There is not in America, I believe, any seminary of learning which has in so few years from its institution, qualified so many men for public service, especially in the ministry, as that which you have governed and instructed, with so much dignity and reputation. May you long continue the ornament of your flourishing University, and be the

Digitized by Google

happy instrument, in the hand of Heaven, of carrying into effect the noble design of its pious and benevolent founder. Be pleased to accept for yourself, and for the other gentlemen of the corporation, my sincere wishes for your personal prosperity and public usefulness, as the only return which I am able to make for the honor which you have ventured to confer upon me. And be assured that I shall ever consider your public mark of respect, as a sort of sacred trust which requires me to support your judgment, as well as my own reputation, by constantly exerting my best endeavors for the promotion of the best of causes.

"I am, with every sentiment of respect and esteem,

"Sir, your most obedient and obliged servant,

"NATHANAEL EMMONS.

"The Honorable John Wheelock, LL. D."

Dr. Emmons was a profound student, as well as a rigid opponent, of the noted metaphysician, Dr. Richard Price. His feelings of personal esteem for the English moralist, are intimated in the following reply to one of Emmons's letters:

"HACKNEY, NEAR LONDON, March 22, 1788.

"DEAR SIR:—I take the opportunity of Mr. Adams's return to America, to acknowledge the receipt of your letter and the sermons that accompanied it, and also the letter from the Committee of your congregation. My best thanks are due to yourself and to your society, for the honor which you and they have done me, by the favorable manner in which the present I made them of my writings has been received; and they have, in return, my ardent wishes that they may prosper and flourish by a constant improvement in the Christian graces and virtues, and particularly in that enlightened liberality of sentiment, and extended charity and candor of disposition, which I reckon some of the most amiable and dignifying qualities, and above all things necessary to the peace and happiness of the Christian church.

"I rejoice to find that they are under the instruction and care of a minister so able and candid as you are. May your usefulness and comfort among them be always increasing."

. . . . . .

"The inquiry you make about my sentiments of Mr. Hume's assertion, that a thing may begin to exist without a cause, you will find in some measure answered in the first chapter of my Treatise on Morals; and my sentiments on most of the great disputed points of Christianity, you will find in the volume of sermons which I have lately published. These sermons I beg may be accepted as an addition to the present of books which I have made to your parish; and I shall take the first opportunity of conveying them.

"Be so good as to inform your people, how truly sensible I am of the kindness of their letter to me. With all the best wishes and great regard, I am, dear Sir,

"Truly yours,

"Rev. Nathanael Emmons." "RICHARD PRICE.

It must not be conjectured that all the correspondence of Dr. Emmons is of this stately character. His own letters are uniformly dignified, but often breathe out his warm personal attachments. To a clergyman in sorrow, he wrote:

Digitized by Google

"FRANKLIN, Jan'y 7, 1789.

"DEAR BROTHER: — When I heard of your late bereavement, it filled my mind with a train of tender feelings. I immediately entered into your case and felt your sorrows. I wished to see you and mingle my tears with yours. But I reflected that there was a better Comforter near you, to whom you could pour out your heart, and on whom you could cast your burdens, with unspeakably more freedom, pleasure, and advantage. We preach *unconditional submission*. This is a duty and this is a happiness amidst the heaviest trials. It is much easier and happier to give up all to God, than a part. Afflictions therefore which dash all our hopes, and write vanity upon all our comforts, are the best suited to prepare us for the nearest approaches to God and the highest enjoyment of him. I trust, therefore, you will enjoy great supports under your great trials. And, please to imagine that while you are sitting alone, bereaved of your nearest and dearest friend, you still have others, though at a distance, who bear you upon their hearts with the tenderest sympathy and affection, among whom you will, I hope, reckon your affectionate friend and brother,

"NATH'L EMMONS.

"Rev. Aaron Hall," [Keene, N. H.]

### § 4. *Visit of Dr. Archibald Alexander to Dr. Emmons.*

"Although a Calvinist, he was no bigot." This remark is often made by men who are sure that the normal tendency of Calvinism is to shrivel up the hearts of its advocates. Nathanael Emmons did not regard Archibald Alexander as a consistent theologian; still he loved Alexander's practical discourses. In the year 1800, when Emmons was in his fifty-sixth year, and Alexander in his twenty-ninth, the latter paid a visit to the former, and remained with him several days. Emmons gave up his time to the youthful guest, and listened with delight to his sermons. When asked, why he thus abandoned his habit of study, and rode around the country to hear the young minister, Dr. Emmons replied: "I am trying to learn how to preach." — In the Memoir of Dr. Alexander (pp. 244–249), a narrative of his visit to Franklin is thus introduced:

"The name of Dr. Emmons" [writes the author of the Memoir], "was perhaps as extensively known as that of any divine in New England. The perspicuity, vigor and terseness of his style, the ingenious concatenation of his arguments, his adventurous boldness, the startling nature of his conclusions, and the increasing number of his adherents, made him a master not to be despised or overlooked." [The Memoir then quotes the narrative of Dr. Alexander.]

'Franklin,' says our narrative, 'the town in which Dr. Emmons lived, joined the State of Rhode Island. Mr. Coffin [this travelling companion of Dr. Alexander, is



Digitized by Google

the divine alluded to in Chapter XI. § 5, below] was desirous that I should see this champion of the new divinity. I have no doubt that he had a design in taking me to this venerable theologian, believing that by his conversation I should be brought over, for I was already quite a follower of Edwards. Nor had I the least objection to receive light from any quarter. We, therefore, turned aside from the main road, and came to the doctor's house early in the evening. The country around was better cultivated than any I had yet seen in New England, and Dr. Emmons occupied a large and commodious farm-house very near to his church. I found him to be rather taciturn than talkative. He indeed made many and earnest inquiries of Mr. Coffin respecting the progress of the new opinions in Tennessee, whither Dr. Balch had carried the seed from Massachusetts.

'Mr. Coffin proposed to me, as did Dr. Emmons, to remain there and preach, as he had promised to supply a vacancy at some distance. I consented without hesitation; expecting, however, to undergo a thorough sifting, and perhaps be under a moral necessity of changing my creed. I found that my remaining for so many days was likely to be an inconvenience to Mrs. Emmons, who appeared to be a discreet, sensible and pious woman. But on the first day of my sojourn, the doctor took me to a monthly meeting of ministers at old Mr. Sanford's, within a few miles, which, however, he was not in the habit of attending, as he did not belong to the club. A dinner was always provided, after which there was a sermon in the church. The two old gentlemen had long been neighbors, but did not agree in their views of either doctrine or church discipline; but they were friendly when they met. And as the doctor had brought a Virginia preacher, a nondescript, they made him doubly welcome. They differed even more in politics than in religion; for Mr. Sanford was a democrat, of a school hitherto unknown to me, holding that when the church was fully established, there would be no need of civil government.

'On that day the sermon came in turn to be preached by the Rev. Mr. Alexander [see Chapter XII. § 4, below] of Mendon, a man of some learning. But he was understood to have gone to Boston, and it was doubtful whether he would be there. It was therefore put upon me to preach, and Mr. Sanford took me up stairs into his study, and left me to make such preparation as I needed. In the mean time Mr. Alexander arrived, having ridden twenty or thirty miles in a very hot day. To his inquiries as to what arrangement had been made for preaching, Mr. Sanford replied, "We certainly expect Mr. Alexander to preach." Mr. A. declared it to be out of the question, but Mr. S. continued to repeat, "We expect a sermon from Mr. Alexander, and no other." Thus he continued the hoax, until the bell rang for the public service, upon which I descended and was formally presented as the Rev. Mr. Alexander, from Virginia. I never saw a man more suprised or relieved. We went to the church, and found a respectable number for a week day and a busy season. At that time I used no notes in the pulpit, but being in a country where all sermons were read, I felt it incumbent on me to make my discourses as methodical and accurate as I could. And though I never could commit words so as to depend on my memory, I had long accustomed myself to follow trains of thought, and the regular array of an argument. I took as a text, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." . . . .

'As I insisted strongly on the position that love must terminate on the true character of the object beloved, I gave them all great pleasure, as this showed that I did not hold to the selfish scheme of virtue. When I got into the chaise with the old

Digitized by Google

doctor, he made me quite ashamed with his laudation, and assured me there was nothing in the sermon which he did not approve.

'The next day, Dr. Emmons took me to a much greater distance to a weekly lecture. The audience was small. My text was Luke 14: 18. "But with one consent they all began to make excuse." The next day, being the Fourth of July, he took me to a neighboring town, where an oration was to be delivered by a certain Dr. Manning, who had once resided in Virginia. The doctor [Emmons] was greatly out of his element at this meeting, for the oration was rabidly democratic, and the people assembled were generally of this party.

'The next day was Saturday, and Dr. E. left home for the place of his appointment. During the visit he never attempted to enter into any controversy, but seemed rather to avoid all doctrinal discussion. He had a young man studying with him, who was principally occupied in writing two discourses for the Sabbath, and these, according to the custom, he read to his preceptor. I was present on one of these occasions. The main object of the sermon was, to prove man's dependence on God for every thing, including every thought and emotion. After this exercise, the young man, whom I took to be very stupid, propounded to the doctor this question: "If man is dependent for all thoughts and feelings, and if the law of God requires him to be holy, while his thoughts are sinful, then does not God require the creature to be independent?" I wondered how he would answer it, when, after a few moments pause, he turned to me and asked me how I should reply to the question. I begged to be excused from any such attempt, and so the matter went off without an explanation.

'In person, Dr. Emmons was a little inclined to be corpulent. His hair was thin, and his countenance rather florid than pale. His knowledge of the Southern States was imperfect. He had just published a sermon on the character of Jeroboam, which was considered excessively severe against Jefferson, who had just ascended the presidential chair; yet, as far as I could judge, he cherished no malignity against any one, on religious or political grounds.' (See Chapter VIII. § 3.)

We insert here [continues the author of the Memoir], for the sake of connection, a statement found in another manuscript [of Dr. Archibald Alexander, the MS. Life of Rev. William Graham].

'Old Dr. Emmons once said to me, in defending the bands and cocked hats which were then used in New England: "Clergymen, when they travel or go abroad, should have some badge of their profession. It preserves them from many unpleasant rencounters, and causes them to remember their sacred office. For," added he, "when a clergyman thinks that he is not recognized as such, he is very apt to yield to unsuitable compliance; and often, when he seeks to be *incognito* he is known to all the company." This is a sage remark.'

"In the frequent mention [continues the Memoir], which Dr. [Archibald] Alexander was accustomed to make of this visit, he always spoke of him [Emmons] in high terms of respect; while he entertained, as is well known, very different theological opinions. But it was characteristic of him to treat with great liberality, and in some respects with esteem and affection, those whom he at the same time regarded as seriously erroneous."

Digitized by Google

## CHAPTER VIII.

### HIS INTEREST IN NATIONAL POLITICS.

THE public life of Emmons might be divided into three epochs; his early afflictions, his subsequent prosperity, his later troubles. Among his early afflictions were those resulting from his inadequate preparation for college, his prolonged wanderings without a parish, the death of his first wife and the burial of his two children in one grave by the side of their beautiful mother. By these troubles he was educated for his lengthened pastorate. Not by these alone, however; for while recording the scenes of his first marriage, he thus describes

#### § 1. *His Troubles during the Revolutionary War.*

"We went to housekeeping the next week after marriage, with mutually raised expectations. But alas! we knew not what a day might bring forth. A thick, and dark, and terrible storm was gathering, which involved us and our country in deep distress. In less than a week after we had entered our new and peaceful habitation, Lexington battle took place, which proved to be the commencement of a long and bitter war between Britain and America. This great and alarming event gave a dark and discouraging aspect to all our future circumstances in life. I always dreaded war, being totally destitute of a martial spirit, and viewing it highly detrimental to the interests of learning, religion and morality. But the war which now commenced, was of the most malignant kind. It was really a civil war; which originated in, and was productive of, the basest passions of the human heart. Though Britain and America were two countries, yet the inhabitants were one nation, and had always been subjects of the same sovereign.



Digitized by Google

Hence it was to be expected, the contention between such brethren would be extremely cruel and bloody; and so it eventually proved. Besides, the Americans were divided among themselves. Their crown officers, and some of their leading and most opulent citizens were on the side of Britain, and obstructed all measures in opposition to the British parliament. This created reproaches, invectives, tumults, and violent proceedings in different colonies, counties, towns, parishes, and even neighborhoods. But being heartily attached to my country, and firmly believing we had justice on our side, I met with very little difficulty on account of my political principles or conduct. I always meant to throw all the weight I had into the scale of liberty; though I verily thought some of its advocates adopted sentiments and pursued measures, which were really hostile to good government. And now I believe that many honest Whigs are fully convinced of the errors of some of their fierce and unprincipled leaders." — *Memoir of himself.*

It was very natural that Emmons should feel indignant in regard to some movements of the Revolutionary party. He could not be tranquil in view of such facts as the following recorded by President Stiles in his diary for November 24, 1774.

"The Rev. John Smalley, pastor of the Congregational church in New Britain, in Farmington, in Connecticut, has given great offence to the public and to his Congregation, by his expressions unfriendly to public liberty; particularly condemning the rising of the people on the memorable Lord's day of fourth of September last. A body of his neighbors, the sons of liberty in that vicinity were about to wait on him, but he took horse, and fled to visit his wife's relations at Bethlehem. He sent Dr. Bellamy, who went and preached for him and attempted to assuage the wrath of his people, but could not give entire satisfaction. He is not at all connected with the tories; however, he has adopted pretty absolute principles of civil government and submission to the higher powers; and on the general question respecting the present contest between America and the Parent State, is for passive obedience and nonresistance. I believe it is partly from a conscientious persuasion, that passive obedience in civil things is the Apostolic doctrine."

"But though," continues Dr. Emmons, "I met with no peculiar difficulty in regard to the grounds of the war, yet I shared largely in its common calamities; because I was not prepared, as many of my fathers in the ministry were, to meet them. I had just purchased a settlement, and involved myself in debt, to

Digitized by Google

the amount of at least two hundred pounds [$666.67]. The two years before the war began, my people punctually paid my salary, and advanced one hundred pounds of my settlement a year before it was due by contract. [The settlement was two hundred pounds, or $666.67; one half to be paid within one year, the other half to be paid within two years after his ordination. The salary was eighty pounds, or $266.67.[1]] But from the beginning to the end of the war, my people, like many others, neglected to pay my salary at the usual time, and in the usual manner. Nor was this all; the paper currency very early and rapidly depreciated, which threw me into great embarrass-

[1] The salary of a country pastor in Massachusetts at this time was between sixty, and one hundred and forty pounds; or between two hundred, and four hundred and sixty-six dollars. Generally it was between seventy-five, and one hundred and twenty pounds; or between two hundred and fifty, and four hundred dollars. The salary of Dr. Emmons was equal to that of many eminent ministers in his day. His parish voted him a "present" of thirty-three dollars in 1794; of sixty-six dollars in 1795; of eighty dollars in 1796; of one hundred and twenty dollars in 1797; of one hundred dollars in 1798, 1799, and 1800, each year; of one hundred and thirty-three dollars in 1801 and 1802, each year; of one hundred and eighty-three dollars in 1803; of two hundred dollars in 1804 and 1805, each year; of two hundred and thirty-three dollars in 1806. From the year 1806 until his resignation of the pulpit in 1827, his salary was five hundred dollars. From 1827 until his death, he received an annuity from his parish of one hundred and fifty dollars *per annum*. (See p. 63, above).

The sufferings of Dr. Emmons in consequence of the war, from the depreciation of the currency, may be inferred from the following Church Record:

"MARCH 9, 1787.

"The Church voted to give to their Pastor the interest of their public moneys for the two last years; and accordingly directed their Treasurer, Dea. Joseph Whiting, to pay their Pastor seventy-five dollars in public securities, which were estimated at 4s. upon the pound, and *amounted to about* 16 *Dollars in Silver*."

The carefulness and particularity of the Franklin church has been already noticed in Chapter III. It will be seen in Chapter IX. that their minister was invited to attend one hundred and five Councils during his pastorate. When the church noticed the pecuniary burden which these Councils imposed upon him, they resolved to give him some pecuniary relief in this regard, and they passed the following votes on Jan. 28, 1790:

1. Voted, "That the Deacons of the Church should from time to time, as occasion should require, take the following method to raise money to discharge the travelling expenses of the members sent on Ecclesiastical Councils, beyond the distance of forty-five miles, viz.: make an average among the male members of the church, and notify each of his particular part of the expense arisen. And,

2. Voted, "That each member of the church should bring in his money bound up in a paper, with his own name fairly written upon it, the next Sacramental Lecture day, after he has been notified of his part of the sum due by average."

Digitized by Google

ments. For, instead of being able to pay for my farm, I was obliged to run farther into debt, and even to borrow money from time to time, to provide necessaries for my family. In short, for the space of fifteen or sixteen years, I was obliged to pay interest for about two hundred pounds [or $666.67]. These were my pecuniary difficulties, which arose principally from the war.[1]

"But it deeply affected me in other respects; it diverted the attention, and even the affections of the people from me. They were so much embarrassed themselves with the expenses, labors, and fatigues of the war, that they neglected to attend public worship, and became very indifferent to every thing of a religious nature. Those who had been apparently warm friends, became cold and distant in their behavior towards me, and sometimes, indeed, treated me with real disrespect and contempt. These things were severe and unexpected trials. For I always meant to treat my people in a friendly and condescending manner, in all my private and public conduct. And being fully of the opinion, that no minister can be useful to a people, any longer than he possesses their esteem, confidence, and affection, I determined to take a dismission from my pastoral relation, whenever I should discover such symptoms of unusefulness. This appeared to be the case, at the close of the year 1780, and accordingly I asked a dismission, on Lord's day, January 21, 1781. But my

[1] Rev. Dr. Peter Thacher, of Malden, afterwards of Brattle Street, Boston, published in 1783 a Pamphlet, entitled: "Observations upon the Present State of the Clergy of New England, with Strictures upon the power of dismissing them, usurped by some churches." On page 4 of this Pamphlet, he says: "The late contest with Great Britain, glorious as it hath been for their country, hath been peculiarly unfortunate for the clergy. Perhaps no set of men, whose hearts were so thoroughly engaged in it, or who contributed in so great a degree to its success, have suffered more by it." "The sufferings of the clergy during the existence of the paper medium, were much greater than many are willing to believe. Of the very necessaries of life, some of them were at that time destitute." In 1784, there appeared from the press: "Strictures on the Rev. Mr. Thacher's Pamphlet, etc., by J. S——, a Layman." These Strictures drew forth from Dr. Thacher a second Pamphlet, entitled: "A Reply to the Strictures of Mr. J. S——, etc." The author of the Strictures had acknowledged the deprivations of the clergy, but had said that parishioners who did not pay the regular salary, had afterwards made grants of money to the suffering pastors. Dr. Thacher replied: "It is very possible that the people in every parish (who did not happen to be offended with their ministers), made them grants in paper-money. It is very true, that before they received this, or it was collected, it depreciated so much as to be inadequate to the purposes for which it was granted."

Digitized by Google

request was not granted, and I continued in tolerable peace, till the year 1784, when I again asked a dismission, on Lord's day, May 20. This request was also denied.[1] In both these instances of asking a dismission, I acted with sincerity, and without any sensible sinister motives. No man, perhaps, felt more reluctance to leaving his people, than I did mine. I had cherished a warm and sincere attachment to them, and viewed them in general as the most intelligent, kind, and ministerial people I was ever acquainted with. And this attachment has never been destroyed, though sometimes weakened, by what I have deemed very unseemly and ungrateful conduct.

"But after all, I am apt to think, they have generally entertained too high an opinion of my abilities, and too low an opinion of my attachment to them. Here, however, we may have erred on both sides. Our feelings and opinions respecting each other will never be known, till the day arrives that will disclose the secrets of all hearts, and rectify all mistakes; and I am willing to refer all things to Him, who will judge without error and without partiality."

### § 2. *His Political Discourses and Action; His Rules for Them.*

The patriotism of the clergy during the war of the Revolution, has been generally admired. Seldom has the sincerity of it been questioned.[2] Still, the worth, the depth, the wide reach of

[1] These were bold measures. It was very unusual for a minister, at that early day, to ask a dismission from his people. The Revolutionary war, instead of inducing pastors to request a release from their parishes, more frequently stimulated the parishes to procure a release from their pastors. Hence in the pamphlet of Dr. Thacher, mentioned in the preceding note, he proposes a stringent ecclesiastical rule, by which the "power of dismissing" a minister shall be taken from the *people*, who had "usurped" it since the Revolution, and shall be vested in an authoritative judicatory, consisting of delegates from churches who had no personal interest in the parish desiring to free itself from its pastor. The lay-author of the "Strictures" confesses, that the Revolution had "diminished the awe" formerly felt for both "ministers and magistrates," but protests against any interference with the rights of the people. It is worthy of note, that Dr. Emmons never intimates a wish to modify the old Congregational usage in this regard.

[2] In one of the early pamphlets relating to the Revolution, the Congregational ministers were accused of cherishing hostility to Great Britain on merely sectarian grounds. The fear of Episcopacy, it was stated, aroused the opposition of these clergymen to the country which sustained the Episcopal church.

Digitized by Google

their influence in achieving the freedom of the colonies, have never been, as they ought to be, appreciated. They have not, indeed, been entirely forgotten. In the more recent crises of the Republic, our statesmen have invoked the aid, and relied on the wisdom of our pastors, for the conservation of the liberties which the pulpit of the Revolution helped to secure. It seemed like a matter of course to request and to expect, that Dr. Emmons would engage in political discussions. It was natural for the people to call him out during "Shay's Rebellion," and the war of 1812. Millington, his native town, had been uncommonly patriotic. His immediate predecessor in the ministerial office had sacrificed his life in the chaplaincy of the Revolutionary war. Some of his nearest clerical neighbors had been engaged, two of them with rare zeal, in the same service.[1] Emmons had long resided in the county of Fisher Ames,[2] and Samuel and John Adams. Some of his clerical friends were earnest politicians.[3] He had been intimate with many of the Revolutionary soldiers. His eye had been watchful over political events since

[1] Rev. David Avery of Wrentham. See Sprague's Annals, Vol. I. p. 697; also Rev. David Sanford of Medway, see Annals, Vol. II. pp. 48–53.

[2] Among the letters addressed to Dr. Emmons, one was found from Fisher Ames, requesting his advice with regard to the appointment of certain civil magistrates.

[3] A few of Dr. Emmons's most intimate associates, as the patriotic Sanford, of Medway, sympathized with the Democratic party; but the Hopkinsian as well as the moderate Calvinists were, in the general, Federalists. Andover Theological Seminary was denounced by some Democrats as designed to effect "the gradual union of Hopkinsianism and Politics." Rev. Solomon Aiken of Dracut, Massachusetts, published a severe Review of one of Dr. Samuel Spring's Political Discourses, and informed the stern Hopkinsian, that "his discourses have a tendency to set the North against the South, to unite New England with old England, agitate the people, stir men up to violate the laws of the State, of morality and religion." In a pamphlet published just before the war of 1812, and entitled, "A view of the Calvinistic Clubs in the United States," we read of "the Monthly Clubs of the Calvinistic Clergy," and we are told: "As they have not assumed a name by which they can be properly designated, I will call them the Calvinistic Clubs. These originated about thirty years ago, and were designed to increase the power and influence of the clergy. They were projected by Drs. Bellamy, Goodrich, Sproat, Williams and others in New England." (p. 4.) "Connecticut is almost totally an ecclesiastical State, ruled by [Dr. Dwight] the President of the College, as a monarch." (p. 14.) Princeton, Dartmouth, and Cambridge Colleges receive also their share of opprobrium. In 1814, was published a pamphlet bearing this title: "An Address to the Clergy of New England, on their opposition to the Rulers of the United States. By a Layman. 'Ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble—therefore have I made you contemptible and base before the people:'—Mal-



Digitized by Google

the period of the old "French war."[1] His political sufferings had qualified him, and also entitled him to speak on the affairs of his adopted Commonwealth and his native country. He was heard and read as one whose knowledge was dear bought and worthy of deference. His political discourses were studied by men of eminent name. Some of these discourses became highly celebrated. They were the fruit of extensive reading and of large experience.

The political action of ministers is attended with some perils. It should, therefore, be guided by judicious rules. The rules which Emmons adopted for himself are illustrated thus:

First. He performed his duties to his country, in the spirit of earnest love to God.

"He carried his religion," says Dr. Ide,[2] "into every department of life, and acted in reference to the affairs of state, with the same regard to the authority and glory of God and the present and future good of mankind, which he maintained in the discharge of his professional duties. He believed that human governments ought to be based upon the great principles of equity and justice which are inculcated in the Scriptures; and that those who rule over men, ought to 'be just, ruling in the fear of God.' He therefore felt it to be his duty, not only to pray for all that were in authority, but to use his influence in every proper way to put good men into office, and to sustain them in their efforts to maintain a righteous government. He believed that the right of suffrage belongs to ministers as truly as to other men, and that they are under essentially the same obligation to use it as any other class of citizens; and with the same independence which was characteristic of him in all other cases, he uniformly went to the polls and deposited his vote for the man of his choice. He was no partisan either in his feelings or conduct. He fomented no political disputes, attended no caucuses, and used none of the arts, intrigues, or management which are common among polit-

achi."—The author (Hon. William Plumer), writes: "The clergymen of New England, your predecessors of 1775, 1776, in the time of our Revolutionary war, adopted a manly course of conduct, directly the reverse of yours. Their time, their talents, both in public and private, were directed to the cause of their country. They cordially supported the measures of our government, were active friends to the suffering soldiers, and inimical to none but the enemies of their country." (p. 7.) The attitude of politicians toward the clergy is *now* what it was a half century ago.

[1] See p. 14, above.

[2] Memoir of Emmons, pp. 73, 74.

Digitized by Google

ticians in securing their object. But he always had his opinion, spoke it freely, and acted with openness and decision according to it. He was unwilling to have his people believe, as many seem to do, that religious principle is useless in politics, while it is of acknowledged importance in every thing else. He taught them their obligations not only to act as citizens, but to act righteously in all their civil, as well as religious concerns. He looked at the conduct of politicians and the actions of civil governments, as they are suited to affect both the temporal and spiritual interests of men. Though he believed that Christ's 'kingdom is not of this world,' yet he knew that the kingdoms of this world were destined to exert an important influence upon the church, and the church upon the world. As he watched the effects of every civil movement in his own town upon the cause of religion there, so he watched the movements of the great men of the nation and of the world, and considered with the deepest interest their probable influence upon the kingdom of Christ."

Secondly. He did not preach his political discourses on the Sabbath. They were delivered on the days of the State Fast, and the State Thanksgiving. His parishioners never went into the house of the Lord, on the day of the Lord, with an apprehension that their views on the *Embargo*, or on the *Alien* and *Sedition Laws*, would be either assailed or applauded. At the present time, the religious solemnities at the State Fast are attended by a small congregation. The discourses of Emmons on this day were heard with lively interest by a large concourse. At the present time, some are disposed to abandon the State Fast as a religious observance; in the ministry of Emmons, politicians had "their portion in due season," and not a few of them remembered his faithful words with thankful reverence.

Thirdly. He never made his political discourses *prominent* among the services of his ecclesiastical year. His name was associated with the doctrines of the Bible, far more than with the schemes of statesmen. When the Franklin pulpit was mentioned, it suggested certain truths of revelation, rather than certain votes of Congress. The complaint of him was, that he preached too often on the "hard doctrines of Calvinism," rather than on moral or political duties.

Fourthly. He discussed political *principles* in his Fast and Thanksgiving sermons, and did not ordinarily name the *persons*

Digitized by Google

who defended wrong views. His language was that of a Christian statesman, rather than that of a secular politician. He elaborated his arguments and weighed his words. During the administration of rulers whom he detested, he was strenuous in urging the duty of strict obedience to them.[1] The greater part of his political sermons would now meet the approbation of all Christians.

Fifthly. He engaged in political discussion for the religious benefit of *his own people*. He did not stand up in the Franklin pulpit, and discharge his cannon against a distant community. He did not speak as our Representatives in Congress often declaim, for the edification of the absent. He believed that his great duty was, to educate the souls of his own parishioners for the eternal world. His great aim was to form their minds for right action in politics, as for right action in agriculture or trade; so that in *all* things they might serve God, and secure the plaudit, "Well done." He conducted his ministry for the benefit of the individual souls especially committed to his care; and if his discourses, which were primarily designed to nurture sound principle in his own hearers, could afterwards be applied to the same use among distant communities, he was willing to *print* what he at first intended merely to *preach*.

Sixthly. He discoursed on political themes, not so as to impair, but so as to augment his influence on the higher themes of the Bible. He doubtless erred in certain particulars; but on the great whole his political adversaries were compelled to own the fairness of his statements and the soundness of his theories. One of these opponents has said: "I often heard the doctor preach what were called his political sermons, about which so much noise was made at the time, and I always liked him. The principles which he advanced were true, and such as I believe the Bible inculcates."[2] He did offend now one and then another of his parishioners, by his manner of *applying* some political truth which he had proved. But the offence was not permanent, nor did it lessen the reverence which they felt for his conscien-

[1] "Though we know beforehand," he writes, "that there are measures [limits] of submission to all human authority, yet no man can determine what they are, until cases actually take place which will justify resistance."

[2] Dr. Ide's Memoir, p. 75.

Digitized by Google

tious fidelity. It cannot be said of him, as it has been said of his able classmate, Dr. Lyman: "His political relations subsequently gave rise to a very unhappy state of things in the parish, and old animosities continued to rankle even till the day of his death." He never made the remark of that excellent classmate, "that too much zeal in politics had hindered his usefulness;" nor like Dr. Lyman, did he address his successor in the pastoral office in the following words of self-reproach: "You may profit by my experience; attend to your spiritual duties, and let Cæsar take care of his own affairs."[1] Lyman and Emmons were wise men, both of them; and in examining the political career of Emmons, we detect the very decisive signs, that he knew how far to go, where and when to stop; that he understood his people, "spoke out his whole mind" to them, but in such a way as to secure their confidence when he lost their acquiescence, to heighten their esteem for his honest and strong mind when he failed to make them love what he loved; and, above all, he preached on politics so much less than on the *distinctive* truths of the Gospel, that the *doctrines* outshone the *theories*, and men's approval or disapproval of him as a *civilian*, was lost in their approval or disapproval of him as a *divine*.

Seventhly. He discussed political principles in a style which has been sanctioned by the wisest pastors in all lands and all ages. Clergymen have been called the "spiritual police," the "moral constabulary of a land." When Emmons was assailed for his political sermons, he replied:

"In the beginning of this century, there was a party in Britain friendly to the Pretender, who bitterly complained of Bishop Hoadley and other clergymen, for supporting the house of Hanover, and inculcating loyalty and subjection to those in the peaceable possession of the reins of government. And there are many now in America, who are friendly to France, and who publicly reproach those preachers of the gospel who presume, at this interesting crisis of public affairs, to step forth in the cause of their country, and inculcate the duty of submission to those patriotic rulers who are seeking the safety and interest of the nation. But if what has been said in this discourse be true, their complaint

[1] Sprague's Annals, Vol. II. p. 14.



Digitized by Google

of the clergy is altogether unscriptural, unreasonable, and inconsistent. It is unscriptural; because ministers are required by the precepts of the gospel and the practice of Christ and the Apostles, to inculcate submission to government. It is unreasonable; because ministers have the common right of citizens to form their own opinions and to speak their own sentiments, upon such public measures as relate not merely to the local politics of a town or parish, but to the great body of the nation. And it is inconsistent; because those who complain are highly pleased to hear ministers preach in favor of the government they like, and in support of the measures they approve. They now condemn the same kind of preaching which, less than twenty years ago, they highly applauded. They have no real objection against political preaching, but against what is preached upon political subjects. It is readily admitted, if ministers recommend tyranny to rulers, or sedition to subjects, they deserve to be censured; but on the other hand, if they preach sound doctrine in politics and morals, their preaching ought to be candidly heard and religiously followed. And for my own part, I verily believe there is now a special call in providence to all the ministers of the gospel, to put men in mind of the duty and importance of supporting the Constitution, and submitting to the administration of our present free and excellent government."[1]

### § 3. *His Jeroboam Sermon.*

The fourth of the preceding remarks should not be received without some grains of abatement. The Franklin statesman did sometimes *name* the individuals whom he opposed, and he gave them a decidedly bad name. He had watched the course of the French philosophy; he had studied the career of Napoleon; he believed that Thomas Jefferson was thoroughly stained with the infidel principles of France, and that the Jeffersonian party was an ally of the French usurper. Hence he resisted the progress of that party, as he would resist the promulgation of an infidel creed.[2] He regarded himself as defending the *Bible*, when he defended the administration of Washington and Adams.[3] Thus

[1] Orig. Ed. Vol. II. pp. 139, 140.

[2] "Republicans," he said in 1802, "are a new political sect, lately risen up in America, who derive their notions of government from Turgot, Condorcet, Thomas Paine, Needham, or some other politicians of the same class."

[3] In his Thanksgiving Sermon for 1800, he speaks of "our present state of doubtful expectation, whether a professed Infidel or a professed Christian will be raised to the first seat of our general government." He was a neighbor of John Adams, and

Digitized by Google

he was deeply religious in his statesmanship. Feeling that the church as well as the country, was endangered by the rise of the democratic, or as it was then called, republican, party, he supposed that he was called as a prophet of God, to utter bold thoughts in bold words. The most *personal* of his discourses on the political dangers of our country, is what is familiarly called his "Jeroboam sermon." On Wednesday eve, the eighth of April, 1801, the metaphysical student was entirely unable to decide on the subject of his discourse for the following day, which was the day of the State Fast. After much perplexity, he concluded to preach an extemporaneous sermon on 2 Kings 17: 21. His discourse was so acceptable to his hearers, that they requested a copy of it for the press. He then committed it to paper for the first time,[1] and as soon as it was published it kindled a flame throughout the Commonwealth. A writer in Duyckinck's Cyclopædia of American Literature, says:

> Emmons's "Jeroboam sermon, on the annual Fast of April 9th, 1801, shortly after the inauguration of Jefferson, has been generally understood to have been levelled at the new President. It could hardly be mistaken, as it plays off Solomon against the infidel Jeroboam with artful parallelism to the new nineteenth century. It is long drawn, solemn, and withering. Reading it with the substitution of Washington, Adams, and Jefferson for their Scriptural prototypes, and taking the federal politics of the time into view, it is a curious analogy."[2]

The same writer indicates many of the parallelisms detected in this sermon between Jeroboam and Jefferson. That Emmons intended to make all these parallelisms so prominent, we are not authorized to affirm. It has been commonly supposed that he

he often alludes with great veneration to that impassioned Federalist. In 1798, he said: "There is not perhaps a man in the world, who is superior to the President of these United States, in political wisdom, integrity and experience." His other favorite politicians were Caleb Strong, John Jay, Ellsworth, Pickering, Pinckney, and above all, George Washington, of whom he tersely says: "Instead of putting his money, he put his character at interest." All of these men he supposed to be the friends of the Bible and of Biblical institutions.

[1] The discourse, as published, is said to be far inferior to the extemporaneous words actually spoken.

[2] Cyclopædia, Vol. I. p. 247.

Digitized by Google

did. The following correspondences have been pointed out by various writers:

*Genius of President Jefferson.*—Jeroboam "early discovered some of those distinguishing natural and moral qualities, which formed him for the extraordinary part which he finally acted on the stage of life. His natural genius was sprightly, bold, and enterprising, which he evidently cultivated, notwithstanding the peculiar disadvantages and embarrassments which attended his education."

*Jefferson as Secretary of State.*—"And Solomon seeing the young man that he was iudustrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph. His appointment to such an office, by such a penetrating prince, is an infallible evidence of his popular talents and pleasing address. These excellent and amiable accomplishments, had they been properly directed to the public good, would have rendered him a great blessing to the nation."

*Jefferson in Paris.*—His "flight into Egypt seems to have been the most fatal period in Jeroboam's life." "He was no doubt an infidel at heart, while he was sowing the seeds of sedition, and plotting to ruin his king and country." "He could not have lived among a more dangerous people than the Egyptians, who were then the most noted nation in the world, for learning, magnificence, superstition, and the grossest idolatry. Hence his residence in Egypt prepared him to return to his native country a more bitter enemy to the God of Israel, and a more malignant opposer of all his sacred rites and institutions, than any pagan priest, or Egyptian philosopher. Such was the ominous character of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, before he reached the object of his wishes, and was placed in the first seat of government."

*Jefferson's Intrigues against the Administration of Adams.*—"Jeroboam the son of Nebat had long been a man of intrigue. He had secretly employed every artifice to prejudice the people against the former administration of government, and had openly presumed to lift up his hand against the king. All this he had done before he fled into Egypt; and it is extremely probable that, during his residence there, he kept up a secret and treasonable correspondence with the disaffected in Israel, and only waited for the death of Solomon to return and seize his throne."

*Complaint of the Jeffersonians with regard to the taxes of the Adams Administration.*—Jeroboam's "business of collecting the public taxes in the tribe of Ephraim and Manasseh, gave him a peculiar opportunity of tampering with the people, and of instilling into their minds the most absurd prejudices against the king and his public measures. He could easily persuade the unthinking multitude that they were unreasonably loaded with taxes, and that they ought to do themselves justice by overturning the government."—"It is now easy to see how this subtle and aspiring man obtained the suffrages of the nation in his favor. It was through his own intrigues, which deluded and infatuated the ten tribes. He actually made himself king, by disaffecting the people to the administration of his predecessor; and he caused this disaffection by basely misrepresenting the wise measures of that wise and excellent ruler. He might justly have complained of Solomon's idolatry and deep declension in religion; but he made no such complaint, because he knew it would not

Digitized by Google

answer his purpose. He therefore made a more popular objection, and loudly exclaimed against the intolerable burden of public taxes."

*Jefferson's new appointments to Office.*" — Jeroboam "was resolved to shake every sacred as well as civil officer from his seat, rather than to lose his own. We are not, indeed, informed whom he appointed to stand around his person, and assist him in the administration of government; but who can doubt, whether he did not display the same corruption of heart in appointing the officers of state, which he had displayed in appointing the officers of religion?"

*Jefferson's Powers of Conversation, and his opposition to the Congregational Clergy.* — "It appears from [Jeroboam's] character and conduct in early life, that he possessed, in a high degree, the art of captivating and corrupting all sorts of people, with whom he conversed. And when he was clothed with the ensigns of royalty, his power and opportunity of corrupting his subjects greatly increased. He became the standard of taste, and the model of imitation. His sentiments and manners became a living law to his subjects. In his familiar intercourse with all around him, he undoubtedly seized those soft moments which were most favorable to his malignant design of seduction. This he could do without departing from the dignity of his station; but it appears that he did more than this, and even stooped to mingle with the priests, and 'to burn incense upon the altars of the golden gods of his own making.'" — "It appears from the character and conduct of Jeroboam, that corrupt rulers will always aim to corrupt the faithful ministers of religion. No other men are so intimately connected with the great body of the people, and have such favorable opportunities of pouring instruction into their minds, and of conversing with them under all circumstances of life. And whether it be a favorable or unfavorable aspect upon the public good, it is a certain fact, that wise and faithful ministers have a larger share in the respect and confidence of the people in general, than those of any other character or profession. Of course they have more influence in forming the religious opinions, the common habits, and even the political sentiment of the subjects of governments, than many of those who are immediately concerned in public affairs. Besides, religion of any kind, whether true or false, takes a stronger hold of the human mind, and has a greater tendency to govern the actions of men, than any theoretical knowledge in any of the arts or sciences, or in any of the pursuits and concerns of the present life. The public teachers of religion, therefore, must necessarily be able in many ways to weaken the hands, and obstruct the designs of corrupt rulers. And it naturally follows that they will endeavor by all means, to corrupt those who minister in holy things. This we find clearly illustrated by the conduct of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who drave Israel from following the Lord."

The writer in Duyckinck's Cyclopædia, Vol. I. p. 247, adds: "If terms and phrases like these needed any 'improvement,' they had it in the sequel of the doctor's discourse:

'It is more than possible that our nation may find themselves in the hand of a Jeroboam, who will drive them from following the Lord; and whenever they do, they will rue the day, and detest the folly, delusion, and intrigue, which raised him to the head of the United States.'

Digitized by Google

and he [Emmons] asks the pertinent question:

'Who can say that men in power may not catch the spirit of the times, and follow the example of Jeroboam, or rather that of the late apostates in Europe? We are becoming more and more connected with those infidel nations, whose politicians and philosophers are the bold patrons and preachers of infidelity. This mutual intercourse affords a peculiar opportunity to try the whole force of their infatuating philosophy upon us in America. And it is beyond a doubt, that our rulers are the most exposed to their fatal delusions. What is there then to forbid our apprehensions, that those in the highest places of power may be corrupted, and actually apostatize from the religion of their country? And should they happen to apostatize, what could hinder them from driving our nation from following the Lord?'"

It is easy to smile at remarks made by a man who in his childhood saw his neighbors march forth in the old French war; made by a man who regularly perused the Hartford Courant, and the high Federal Newspapers; and made sixty years ago, when all Europe was in consternation, and when the progress of French principles in America was far more threatening than it is now. Perhaps the very words which provoke our merriment to-day, were instrumental in averting the dangers which would have turned our laughter into grief. The following paragraph illustrates the intense horror of Jacobinism which characterized the Franklin politician, and which merely amuses his present readers who cannot imagine the perils of a preceding age. On the fifth of July, 1802, Dr. Emmons remarked in his discourse on American Independence:

"Permit me to observe that this Anniversary [July 4th], properly belongs to the Federalists, who ought to improve it in promoting the best interests of their country. It is presumption in Republicans to claim this day as their own. They are the men who have uniformly applauded and justified the French Revolution in all its turnings and windings, and who still pant after French liberty and equality. Can they have any just pretence to celebrate the American Revolution? No; they are apostates from the true principles of the Revolution, and of consequence, apostates from our Federal government. It is absurd in the extreme, for their orators, on this day consecrated to commemorate the best moral, religious, and political principles, to trumpet the corrupt principles of democracy, anarchy, infidelity, and atheism, through our enlightened and well indoctrinated nation. Let true Federalists expose such barefaced

Digitized by Google

abuse of this memorial of our national independence; and convert it to its proper end, which is to promote our national prosperity and happiness."

### § 4. *His Influence on Political Topics.*

The positive and decided language of Dr. Emmons could not have been without its influence in political circles. In his early life the highest politicians honored him. Even so late as in the ninety-second year of his age, he received a letter, of which the following extracts illustrate his long-continued power:

"Permit me, in behalf of the Whig Central Committee of District No. IX., to return you our thanks for the timely and efficient aid you have afforded us in the election of . . . . as our Representative in the next Congress of the United States. . . . . However the Presidential election may terminate, you and your friends will have the satisfaction of knowing, that you have been mainly instrumental in saving this District from falling into the hands of the Radicals. . . . . Like the oak which has outlived its day and generation, you, my dear Sir, yet remain as one of the few connecting links of the present with the past. Your great age, and the strong and retentive powers of mind which the goodness of God yet vouchsafes to your possession and enjoyment, I doubt not, enable you to foresee, that, in all probability, a new party line will soon be drawn among the people of this country; on one side of which will be found all those who would preserve what is good in our free, republican institutions, and on the other, all those who would tear down and demolish the whole. . . . .

"Having, unexpectedly, drawn this letter out to a great length, I will now close it by an expression of our individual and associated desire for your happiness in all that remains to you of this life, and an unfading crown, as the reward of your faithfulness, when God, in his own good time, shall see fit to call you to another and better one.

"I subscribe myself,

"In behalf of the Whig Central Committee, District No. IX.

"Very respectfully, yours."

Digitized by Google

# CHAPTER IX.

## HIS INTEREST IN ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY.

### § 1. *Imagined Inconsistency between his Views of Civil and of Ecclesiastical Government.*

THE earnest mind of Emmons could not fail to take a deeper interest in the polity of the church than in the politics of the nation. He regarded the constitution of the ecclesiastical assembly, as a basis for the constitution of a republican State. He believed that our fathers founded our republic on the *principle* of the church meeting, which is the model for the town meeting; and where this *principle* is carried out most fully, there is the spirit of our government developed most safely. At the first, "every man had his voice, though not perhaps his choice, in all public transactions:" this was the early republicanism which Emmons advocated in the ecclesiastical and in the civil commonwealth.

An inconsistency has often been imagined to exist between his theory of national, and his theory of ecclesiastical government. He was a stern antagonist of Democracy in the State, and a warm advocate of Democracy in the church. Still he believed that the State was modelled after the pattern of the church. The following considerations, however, tend to lessen the seeming inconsistency.

### § 2. *Radical Distinction between the Ecclesiastical and the Political Commonwealth.*

The same originality of mind which Emmons displayed on all other subjects, he evinced in his theory of Church government.



Digitized by Google

He had his own type of Congregationalism, and one organific principle of it was that the church has no legislative power. It is not the pattern for the State in all respects. It is a peculiar body. It is a spiritual body. Men say that the church must have its Senate; but the Senate of this obedient brotherhood is in the heavens. Men say, that it must have its House of Representatives, but its House of Representatives is that two-fold Being who represents our nature and the divine nature in the building not made with hands. Those who are to form "the general assembly and church of the first-born," need no legislative General Assembly on earth. The power of the church is only *executive* (this term including the *judicial*). Emmons writes:

"Christ is the sole lawgiver of the church. He has made all the laws by which it is to be governed. He has delegated no legislative power to a church, by which it has authority to make ecclesiastical laws or canons. The church of Rome has manifested herself to be anti-Christian, by claiming and exercising such a power. No particular church whatever has a right to make a single law or canon to bind its members. It has only the right to execute the law, which Christ has made and published in the gospel."

The law of the church, then, has been given by the only Legislator. What he has commanded, the church is to execute. He has given a rule in Matthew 18: 15–17, for the discipline of an offender. The church is the Jury for the examination of that offender. The church is the Bench of Judges for passing sentence upon him. The church is the Police for enforcing that sentence. The church has no right to require what the Lawgiver in the skies has not required; no right to execute a law which He has not enjoined; no right to introduce a cumbrous machinery for processes which are instituted by human legislators. Emmons's theory was simple in itself, and its tendency was to forestall the complicated manœuvres of ecclesiastics. It was designed to prevent an intermeddling spirit among church members, and confine them to their proper business, the execution of the laws of Christ. "I do not like," said the Millington farmer's son, "the Presbyterian form of government, for I do not like to be yoked up in so long a team."



Digitized by Google

§ 3. *The Dignity of a Church and its Members.*

The ecclesiastical democracy of Emmons was not a mobocracy. His type of Congregationalism was eminently dignified. It was suggested to him by his Scriptural sense of the dignity of the human soul. While he condemned the character, he revered the constitution of the mind, for it is the constitution of the mind of Christ. His language is: "Though man, since the fall, comes into the world destitute of the *moral* image of God, yet in the very frame and constitution of his nature, he still bears the *natural* image of his Maker." His soul is a transcript of the natural perfection of God. "All the sufferings which Christ hath endured on earth, and all the honors which he hath received in heaven, have displayed the dignity of man. And for the same reason, the dignity of man will be eternally rising with the rising honor and dignity of Christ." Dr. Channing has been admired by his friends for developing the grandeur of the human mind. The sermon preached by Emmons in 1786, on the Dignity of Man, is one illustration of his life-long tendency to exalt the soul, and treat it with especial deference. He conversed with the poor, with the degraded, with the very outcasts of society, as with men on whom God had bestowed a jewel of infinite worth. This was the nobility of his Congregationalism. This was his spirit of religious democracy. This was his principle of anti-slavery. This was the principle, that made him jealous for the rights of every individual in the church. He aimed to exempt the humblest member from the domination of men who had received no express, official dominion from God. "The church," he writes, "is neither monarchical, like the church of Rome; nor aristocratical, like the Presbyterian church; but a pure democracy, which places every member of a church upon a level, and gives him perfect liberty with order."

It was because Emmons revered the structure of the soul, and regarded the local church as a society of regenerate souls, endued not only with the *natural* but also with the *moral* image of its Maker, that he exalted this local church as an assembly of priests and kings, and therefore capable of regulating its own concerns. A person who has been censured by the church, he says, "has no right to appeal to any *higher ecclesiastical* tri-

Digitized by Google

bunal for relief, because there *is* no *higher* ecclesiastical tribunal on earth to which he can appeal; and the church have no right to submit their decision to the decision of any *higher* tribunal."

### § 4. *Dignity of the President of a Church.*

His veneration for the local society of believers, Emmons extended to the ministry. He denied the right of a pastor to put his veto upon a vote of the church. "The chief judge of the supreme court," he writes, "has no negative on the side judges, nor they upon him; for this plain reason, that *they must* bring the matter before them to a *decision;* but this *could* not be, if they had a negative upon each other." "The truth is, the pastor is but a mere moderator [of the church], and in respect to voting, stands upon the same ground with a private brother." Still, this Moderator of the church, this President of the society, this Chief Justice among the Associate Judges, was treated by the Franklin minister with peculiar reverence. He did not regard the presiding officer as appointed by *men*, but as *chosen* by men, and as *appointed* by God when the men duly express the choice which they have made. He did not regard ordination as a mere *human* acknowledgment, that the ordained man is a minister. He teaches that "the ordainers do not convey any authority of their own, but only *the authority of Christ*, through the medium of *the church*, to the man they ordain; *by which* he is duly *qualified* to preach the Gospel to his own people, and wherever he is called in providence to execute his ministerial office, with which *Christ has invested* him." When a church has thus performed the condition on which God confers upon its pastor the Presidential authority, that church has no right to dismiss its President without the most imperative reasons. The ordination of a minister is a more dignified and authoritative solemnity, than the election of a moderator by a secular association. He writes thus:

Before the minister was ordained, "he was a mere candidate for office; and whilst he stood in that predicament, they had a right to dismiss him from their service, if they were displeased with his voice, his style, or any other mere personal defect, and call another upon trial.

Digitized by Google

But after he is ordained, he no longer stands in the situation of a candidate; and the church have no longer a right to dismiss him, unless they judge he is so heterodox in sentiment, or corrupt in practice, as to be unqualified for the sacred work of the ministry. If a church dismiss a minister without his consent, they must dismiss him as a man unfit for the pastoral office in any other place, and refuse to recommend him. The connection between a pastor and people, is too sacred and important to be dissolved upon every trifling mistake on either side."

This is one of the paragraphs which illustrate the *strength*, rather than the *perspicuity* of Emmons's style.[1] He does not mean that a council should never acquiesce in a minister's dismission from one church, when it can recommend him to another; nor that a church may not find itself so embarrassed as to dismiss its pastor with a full testimonial of his excellence. His practice explains his meaning to be, that a church must not be *forward* in discovering, still less in inventing, reasons for dismissing its pastor; its members must not disturb the peace of a town by exciting hostility against a minister whom they can recommend to other churches; good men must never take the initiative against a good shepherd, but must learn to bear with his frailty, if they suppose that other men should bear with it.

It may be said, that even this is an extreme view of the indissoluble relation between the church and its President; but it illustrates the tendency of Emmons to magnify the clerical office. He revered this office so highly, that he overlooked many a delinquency in the incumbents of it, *because they sat in Moses' seat.* About the time when Unitarianism was developed in Massachusetts, a neighboring pastor, favoring the Unitarian views, was charged with certain improprieties of conduct, and examined before a mutual council in reference to them. Three of the clergymen on the council were chosen, because they were friendly; and three, because they were hostile to the Unitarian predilections of the pastor; Dr. Emmons was invited by the agreement of the two contending parties, because he was known to be a candid, truth-loving divine. In coming to the result, the three counsellors chosen by the Unitarian party, voted in favor of the suspected clergyman; the three chosen by the

[1] See Chapter XV. § 6, below.

Digitized by Google

Orthodox party voted against him. This tie indicates that the case was a doubtful one, and in want of full evidence on either side the partisans of each may have been governed by their theological predilections. But the moderator, Dr. Emmons, threw his casting vote in favor of the accused. It was hard for the venerable patriarch to condemn a man who had not been proved guilty, and who had been anointed of the Lord, and on whose head had been laid the hands of the Presbytery. In all the details of life he breathed the same reverence for the clerical dignity, whether the dignity was borne by his friends or foes. On one occasion he heard some children in his household criticizing sharply a sermon published by one of his ministerial neighbors. He reproved them for the style of their criticism. The author of the sermon was not a definitely Orthodox man, but he was an ordained minister of God. One of the children made a private appeal to him: "*Is* not the sermon faulty?"—"Shut the door," he replied; "come here;—it *is* rather a scattering shot."—He must tell the truth, but not against a *minister* until the door was shut.

"I have heard it said, even by a minister," he remarks in one of his sermons, on an erroneous statement which might have been expected from a layman, but which was actually uttered, as he *knew* because *he* heard it, "*even by a minister*."

"Every minister of the Gospel," he remarks, "has a more important cause to plead than ever employed the eloquence of Demosthenes, or Cicero. And if he gain his cause, he not only saves a soul from death, and recovers a subject to God; but also conquers the powers of darkness, and fills the world of light with joy."

So highly did Emmons exalt the idea of a parish bishop, that he left no room for any other bishop on earth. So profound was his respect for a local church, redeemed by the blood and sanctified by the Spirit of Christ, that he reserved no room for any higher judicatory under the heavens. He believed in the advisory Council, and always stipulated that the local church be at liberty to accept or reject the result of the Council, as freely as the bench of supreme judges in a civil court adopt or discard the opinions of advocates. "One church," he writes, "has as much power as another. All churches are sisters, and



Digitized by Google

stand upon a level. They may associate or consociate for mutual advantage. But no church has a right to give up its power to an Association or Council, or any other ecclesiastical body." He resolutely opposed all attempts to make the Result of a Council authoritative. He often spoke disparagingly of Councils which aimed to assume a *quasi* ecclesiastical power. He reprobated the practice of introducing lawyers to plead before Councils. The practice tends to transform a familiar reference for advice, into a stately process of judicature. The principles of a Council ought to differ from the principles of a court.

### § 5. *The Church is a School.*

"God has always held a school here, in which he has been training rational and immortal creatures for their future and eternal destination." In an emphatic sense, Emmons regarded every local church as a Christian school; and while it has a Great Teacher in the heavens, it should have a subordinate teacher on the earth. He was the subordinate teacher of the Franklin church. He had no more right to invent doctrines, than to invent laws. He was to repeat the lessons which he had learned from his Master, as the church was to execute the mandates given from on high. He did not wish to fetter a grammar school in Franklin with rules made by, or for, a grammar school in Georgia; and he did not wish to manacle the church in Franklin with orders emanating from some astute ecclesiastics in Florida. He desired that the scholars of the ecclesiastical school which he taught, would study their lessons, would learn the truth, would confine themselves to their great business of pondering on religious doctrine, and regulating their life according to it, and would not cherish a meddlesome spirit with regard to the internal processes of an ecclesiastical school in Alabama.

### § 6. *Emmons illustrated his own Type of Congregationalism.*

"He was himself the great sublime he drew." His example developed his theory. We shall see hereafter that he ennobled

Digitized by Google

his office by his teachings, that he adorned it by the dignity with which he filled the Presidential chair, that he was a biblical diocesan, that he was a metropolitan hierarch, ordained in the temple above. We read that "he attended *thirty* councils called for advice. He received *seventy-five* calls to attend ordinations and installations, as a member of councils, in *six* different States, *fifty-four* of which he attended. At *twenty-five* of these, he was the preacher." He was punctual at the meetings of the Mendon Association, and regularly for the term of twenty-five years presided over its deliberations. Could the ministers of that Association of which he was a member about sixty years, be introduced with him upon the canvas, as they appeared during the last forty years of his life, they would all be painted as reverently looking up to the only man in the group who wore a three-cornered hat. They were wont to visit him as a mental mechanist, who would wind up their intellects and set them in freer motion. The Presidents of our Colleges, the Judges of our Courts, went out of their way to do him reverence. His guests left him with renewed impulse to activity, with larger views of the sphere in which they were called to labor. He did not, at all times, engage the interest of his acquaintance, as he did at chosen times; not abroad, so much as at home; not in extreme old age, as in the prime of life. But few men have exerted greater power with so little parade. He has been called a Jacobin; he might with as much propriety be called a monarchist. He has been stigmatized as an agrarian; he might be more fitly termed an aristocrat. His manners were courtly. His attitudes and whole bearing were those of the higher circles. His opinions were received with great veneration by the clergy around him. Why, then, was he not virtually an archbishop? His honors were not official, but personal. His dominion was not as an ecclesiastic, but as a Christian. He was indebted for his metropolitan authority to his *character*. He had no bishopric save that of his superior worth. If he had depended for his diocesan supremacy upon the *votes* of a House of Bishops, he would have been superseded by some more diplomatical aspirant. If he had relied on any popular election for his power, he would have been outwitted by some more cunning strategist. But he was borne along to his place gradually, imperceptibly,

Digitized by Google

by the silent force of his inward, honest worth. His influence was independent of station; therefore it was permanent. Accordingly, if he cherished a desire for influence, the desire would not have led him to electioneering schemes, but to the cultivation of his mind and heart. Those schemes might have lubricated the way for him to slide into a place of ease or profit, but nothing except inward culture will smooth the passage for a scriptural archbishopric. "In free republics," he said, "where liberty is equally enjoyed, every man has weight and influence in proportion to his abilities, and a fair opportunity of rising by the dint of merit to the first offices and honors of the State." But in a free church, where according to the remarkable words of Richard Mather, every decree of a Council "has just so much force, as there is force in the reason of it;" the influence of solid worth is more facile and more certain, and the encouragements to promote it are more sacred and more sanctifying.

### § 7. *The "Jealousy" of Emmons and Spring.*

While the Congregationalism of Emmons does not appear at all prominent in his writings, yet it influenced his entire life, and incited him to some of those public acts which, more than any others, dimmed for a time his popularity. In a discourse preached at the funeral of Dr. Samuel Spring, it was remarked by Prof. Leonard Woods: "We [the friends of Andover Theological Seminary] had reason to thank him, not only for his incessant watchfulness, but even for his *jealousy* over us; because it was a *godly* jealousy." This remark of Dr. Woods gave umbrage to some men. It was true, however, and it might have been applied to Emmons as well as to Spring, and might have extended not only to one Theological Seminary, but to many devices and processes of the churches. Both of these divines had an apprehension, though perhaps in an unequal degree, that the principles of Congregationalism might be imperilled by an undue zeal for extraneous help, and an improper reliance on human authority, rather than on the simple truth. How far Dr. Emmons was affected by this fear, will be obvious in the ensuing chapter.

Digitized by Google

# CHAPTER X.

## HIS INTEREST IN THE POLICY OF THE CHURCHES.

### § 1. *His Anticipatory Spirit.*

It was a characteristic of Dr. Emmons, that he would frankly state his objections to a measure; and then, if his objections were overruled, and if the measure promised on the whole to result in more good than evil, he would acquiesce in the will of the majority. He would have preferred, if he had been able, to modify that will; but, being unable, he submitted to what he deemed an inferior plan. He lent his aid to the establishment of various Institutions, while he apprehended injurious results from some features of those Institutions. He was not a foe to the Establishments, and yet he disapproved of some peculiarities in their structure. He was decided in his disapproval; he was open as the day in avowing it; but he was not obstinate in opposing what he would have chosen to alter. Still less was he selfish or malignant in attempting to injure what he would prefer to reform. He was as remarkable for his practical concessions, as for his theoretical objections, to new schemes from which he anticipated some mischief, but from which he hoped for a still larger benefit to the common weal.

He was a conservative man; he did not easily move out of the beaten track; yet he was enterprising, and in various particulars he started forward in advance of his times. He was not fond of the details of business. He was a man of principles, rather than of facts. He had a profound acquaintance with human character. He knew its latent springs of action, and its hidden tendencies. He estimated all plans of practical usefulness, according to their agreement or disagreement with the general laws of the human mind. He sometimes failed to make sufficient allowance



Digitized by Google

for the idiosyncrasies of particular individuals, and for the incidental and accidental circumstances which may essentially modify the result of these plans. He judged of the machine by the structure of its wheels and pullies, and sometimes did not calculate sufficiently upon those positions and exposures of the machine which materially affect the action of its parts. Hence his anticipations, although often verified by fact, were sometimes darker than the reality proved to be. But his darkest anticipations had a solid basis. They evince his foresight and his conservatism, even when they have not been borne out by subsequent history. They were often misunderstood, and were the occasion of loading him with unmerited opprobrium. It was not remembered, that his aversion to novelties often prevented him from overlooking the objectionable features of new schemes.

### § 2. *His Apprehensions of Evil from Sabbath Schools.*

It has been reported, that he was an enemy of Sabbath Schools. The charge is false, but still it was not fabricated without any semblance of an apology for it. He highly approved of Sabbath Schools in their original design. This was to provide religious instruction for the poor children who could not be taught by their ragged, ignorant guardians. But he *anticipated*, that if *religious* parents, who had been accustomed to teach the catechism to their children every Sabbath day, should now send their little ones to the Sabbath School, those parents would be tempted to neglect their own appropriate duty of home instruction; and the discourse, which fathers and mothers would utter with their sense of responsibility for their offspring, could not, without detriment, be exchanged for the discourse of irresponsible, often youthful teachers in the school. He anticipated, for example, that his own people would be more carefully instructed in the Bible, if the fathers and mothers continued to feel their undivided responsibility to catechize their children every week, than if they devolved this weekly exercise upon the often incompetent guides who officiate in the Sabbath School. He revered the family institution; he regarded the parents as priests in their households, and he anticipated evil from any thing which dispensed with this priestly office. He believed that the members

Digitized by Google

of a family should live at home. He disliked the practice of living out of doors, of having all things common, and of giving publicity to all religious action. Home devotions, home teachings, home duties of all kinds, he exalted to the highest place.

Besides, he had been accustomed to recommend distinctively Calvinistic volumes for perusal in the families of his parish, and he anticipated that the volumes prepared for Sabbath Schools by a National Society, would be eviscerated of their Calvinism, and would contain no doctrine or sentiment uncongenial with Wesleyan Arminianism, which was his especial abhorrence. It is interesting to notice, that since he made known his anticipations of evil from this source, the distinctively Calvinistic denominations have *virtually* sanctioned his view, have instituted libraries for themselves, and have introduced a Sabbath School literature from which the Calvinistic peculiarities need not be excluded. It is also interesting to see, that all the evils which the Franklin prophet foretold forty years ago, have been lamented in more recent days. The remark is often made, that the children of religious parents are not so carefully instructed in doctrinal theology, as they were once. Indeed it has become fashionable, and significant of rare orthodoxy, to express a fear that Sabbath Schools are toning down our old Puritan faith. Dr. Emmons lifted up his voice on this theme, when the fashions were against him. He said, at the cost of his popularity, what men now say with a gain to their popularity. His predictions illustrate his forecast, as well as his fondness for the old usages. They also prove that, although perspicacious, he was not perfect, and did not foresee the methods in which the bad results which he feared, might be obviated. Notwithstanding, however, all his apprehensions, he did ultimately consent to the establishment of a Sabbath School in his own parish, where it was needed less than in parishes less carefully trained. By no means was he a foe to the institution. He was a hearty friend of it amid uninstructed communities, and a "jealous," watchful friend of it in all communities.[1]

[1] It is by no means pretended, that Dr. Emmons was the only evangelical divine who feared some disastrous consequences from the Sabbath School.—In his discourse delivered Sept. 10, 1860, at the funeral of Rev. Abel McEwen, D. D. of New London, Connecticut, Rev. Professor Field remarks, p. 16, "There was one benevolent en-

Digitized by Google

§ 3. *His Apprehensions of Evil from the National Tract Society.*

As Dr. Emmons apprehended some bad results from a Society, that published only such books for Sabbath Schools as would secure the approval of Calvinists and Arminians; so he anticipated some bad results from a Society, that published only such Tracts for adults as would gain the assent of those antagonistic parties. At the formation of the American Tract Society, he predicted the very evils which have since been deplored. The Calvinistic denominations have now formed Societies for circulating books and booklets which contain the distinctive articles of the Calvinistic faith, and have thus borne witness to the foresight of Emmons, in prophesying that a National Society could not furnish for the Calvinistic churches all the popular literature which they need.[1] He did not oppose the writings published by the American Tract Society; he believed them to be useful within a certain and a large sphere; but he apprehended that the plan of the Society, while it would accomplish vast good, might also tend to lower the standard of our Puritan theology. He did not love the National Tract Society less, but he loved other philanthropic measures more. He gave counsel to its friends, and money to its funds, but he opposed some features of its plan. That plan he regarded as imperfect. He regarded himself as imperfect. Is he to be reprimanded for this distrust of human beings? May there not be what Dr. Woods called a "godly jealousy?"

§ 4. *His Apprehensions of Evil from all National Religious Societies.*

One of his objections to the Societies named above, was equally

terprise in respect to the utility of which, in its incipient stages, he had doubt. It was the Sabbath School. He was fearful, at first, that its teachings would be made a substitute for the religious instruction of the household, which he believed to be the divine institution for the training of the young. But he came to see its necessity for those who could have no Christian instruction in the family, and the aid it might afford to others, and he became its warm friend. Indeed he kept up, to the closing days of his life, a fresh and lively interest in the varied objects of Christian benevolence."

[1] We shall see hereafter, Chapter XIII. § 4, that one of Emmons's theological pupils, Rev. Thaddeus Osgood, had virtually formed a Tract Society, *was himself such a Society*, long before the American Tract Society was originated.

Digitized by Google

an objection to other National Societies. He was not their enemy, for he aided in sustaining them. He was not their blind admirer, for he apprehended evil from some of their tendencies. He was not made up of other people. He had so long occupied one and the same chair in one and the same study, that he placed a high estimate on individual thought, and individual methods of recommending it to the world. His motto was, "Let every man find his own level." He apprehended that National Associations might give undue importance to a particular idea, and to particular persons. He reasoned thus: Twenty or thirty leaders will control the Association; and its thousands of members will be understood as lending their undivided authority to those few men. Twenty or thirty leaders will propose one thought to the Association; and the thousands of members of that Association, while in fact many of them dissent from that thought, and many of them know nothing about it, will be understood as giving their influence in favor of it. Thus, the idea acquires an authority which does not belong to it. Thus, particular men gain a power to which they are not entitled. This factitious influence is an evil. The evil is augmented as the Society is enlarged. When the Society becomes *National*, the time for warning has arrived.

The resistance which this self-consistent reasoner made to one tendency of these associations, was like the resistance which he made to what is termed *fashion*. He disliked the habit of every man's giving up his individual opinion and individual preferences, for the sake of complying with conventional modes in regard to so small a matter as dress. He deemed it advisable for himself to wear a clerical dress; and that style of apparel which he loved in his childhood, and which was made venerable by his fathers.[1] He did what he chose to do. He was willing that other men should regulate their apparel according to their preferences, which were different from his; but his own tastes, which he deemed the more respectable, he did not sacrifice to the conventional tastes which he deemed the more undignified. "Do let every man think for himself, and act for himself;" "Do not make every man just like everybody else," were his mottoes. As he did not

[1] See p. 127, above.



Digitized by Google

insist, that other men wear shoe buckles and knee buckles, so he did not wish other men to prevent *his* wearing them. He was not a conventional man, so much as he was an independent thinker.

But he had a further objection to the National Societies. He anticipated, not only that their moral power might become *virtually* a legal power, but also that certain individuals would desire to form *such* associations *as* would in fact and in form possess a legal power. He early expressed the fear, that the General Assemblies or Convocations of some churches would assume legislative authority over processes, which ought to be altogether within the domain of free thought and free speech. He anticipated that the adherents of Samuel Spring would not exactly coalesce with the adherents of Ashbel Green, in the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions; and that the adherents of Dr. Ashbel Green would be desirous of bringing the cause of Foreign Missions under the legislative authority of Church Courts. The very complaints which he made privately, when the Board was organized, were in less than thirty years made publicly, when certain ecclesiastics withdrew from that Board, in order to bring their missions under Church control. Could he have foreseen their withdrawal, one of his objections to the structure of the National Board would have been obviated. The *multiplication* of large Societies would divide the national authority between them, and thus prevent that concentration of power which he feared.

This perspicacious man anticipated all the complaints which the Presbyterians of the New School, have urged against the Presbyterians of the Old School, in regard to voluntary societies and the freedom of institutions from the judicatories of the church. His revolutionary blood boiled at the idea of ecclesiastical control over the mind which God had made free. He feared that the weapon of church power, although forged for the cause of truth, might be silently turned against the very doctrines which it now defends.

The larger part of his autobiography was written almost sixty years ago; a few paragraphs were written thirty-three years ago; there are reasons for believing that the following sentences were indited forty years ago. Speaking of Calvinists, he says:

Digitized by Google

"They are indeed attacked by all sectarians and errorists; who complain of them for tenaciously maintaining an unsociable religion; just as Jews and Gentiles complained of the primitive Christians for maintaining the pure doctrines of the gospel, which were equally hostile to every false religion in the world. Those, therefore, who now understandingly embrace genuine Calvinism, which is a system composed of the essential and fundamental principles of pure Christianity, cannot consistently amalgamate with Arminians, Methodists, Antinomians, Sabellians, Arians, Socinians, or any species of Universalists and Enthusiasts. This is my settled opinion; and therefore I am surprised that so many, who call themselves orthodox, appear so fond of a coalition with other denominations of Christians, who profess to hold systems of theology which are really opposite to, and subversive of genuine Calvinism. I have been a constant and an attentive observer of the late revolutions in the religious opinions of the clergy, the churches, and the people in New England and the United States. I have also been considerably acquainted with the various societies, which have been formed for the promotion of very important and laudable purposes. Some of these societies and some of their measures, I highly approve and wish to promote. But I do not approve of any of them as national societies, and claiming a national authority to take the education of children out of the hands of parents; or assuming a national authority to superintend our academies, our colleges, our theological institutions, or our churches and their pastors. And if they persist in their claims, and succeed in their measures, I see nothing to prevent their establishing a national religion, and exercising an ecclesiastical dominion, as arbitrary and dangerous as any that now exists in the Christian world.

"I believe it is my duty and the duty of all Calvinists and Congregationalists, to use all proper means and exertions to oppose and restrain every species of error and religious domination, which threatens to destroy our religious rights and liberties. The question now is, What can we do and what ought we to do, in order to obstruct and check the growth and spread of heresy and arbitrary power, among our churches and aspiring ecclesiastics? It appears from all ecclesiastical history, that

Digitized by Google

orthodoxy has been maintained, and heterodoxy suppressed, not by uniting with the heterodox, but by fairly and boldly attacking them with the powerful weapons of Scripture and reason. And these are the only proper weapons to be used by the orthodox against the heterodox, at the present day. I know, that the heterodox have greatly the advantage of the orthodox, in respect to numbers, union, and national popularity. But great is the power of truth over error, and it will ultimately prevail. It certainly becomes all Calvinists and Congregationalists to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered unto them, by the first ministers and churches in New England. Harvard College, Yale College, Dartmouth College, and all Theological Institutions in Massachusetts and Connecticut, were founded by Calvinists and Congregationalists; and it is to be hoped, that some seeds of orthodoxy are still retained and cultivated in these early seats of learning and religion. The orthodox, therefore, have some ground to expect, that if they put on the whole armor of God, and magnanimously fight the good fight of faith, they may yet revive and support the sinking cause of orthodoxy and Christian liberty, in this day of declension, in this once well instructed and well governed nation." — *Memoir of himself.*

Like many words of Dr. Emmons, these are too nervous to be always rightly understood. They have been supposed to imply, that he would lend no aid to our National Societies. But they intimate no such thing. As he stated elsewhere[1] that no church ought to *dismiss* a minister whom the church can *recommend;* but as he still believed that when a church had become involved in difficulties with its pastor, and had destroyed the prospect of his usefulness, the church might, in those new circumstances, dismiss and recommend him; so he stated here, that our National Societies ought not to have been formed; still, after they were formed, he deemed it advisable to aid them. He opposed the principle and the initiation of the societies, while he supported them as establishments already existing. He was an eminently independent thinker, yet eminently inclined to respect such institutions as were planted deep in the affections of good men.

[1] See pp. 147, 148 above.

Digitized by Google

Like other self-forgetful Christians, Dr. Emmons does injustice to himself in the paragraph quoted above. "*Some of these societies, and some of their measures I highly approve and wish to promote!*" He does not proclaim the fact, that he gave an early impulse to some of them, and that he was alert in recommending them, before many of his brethren had recognized their value. If he had sounded his own trumpet, he might have claimed the honor of a pioneer in advocating the principle of Mutual Associations for benevolent purposes. In despite of all his love for personal freedom and individuality, he began, seventy years ago, to propose the forming of such local societies.[1]

### § 5. *His Distinction between the National and the State Societies.*

When Dr. Emmons was asked, how he could defend the State Societies, while he opposed some features in the National Societies, he would reply, that it is obviously day at eleven o'clock, A. M., and it is obviously night at eleven o'clock, P. M., and yet it is difficult to draw the exact line between the day and the

[1] As early as the third of November, 1790, he preached, and in the same year he published, the words: "Nor let any imagine, that it is either impracticable or fruitless in these times to form *unions* in virtue to weaken and destroy the combinations in vice." After alluding to a sermon from the Bishop of St. David, portraying the success of European Societies for the Reformation of Morals, Emmons continued: "These accounts carry convincing evidence, that unions in virtue may be so formed and conducted, as to restrain, in some measure at least, the progress of vice. What is there, then, which can possibly prevent us, in this day of declension, from uniting our exertions for the reformation of manners, but merely the want of virtuous resolution? Were we sufficiently possessed of virtuous resolution, we might easily form such respectable unions, as would put the bold and brazen vices to the blush, and cause them to creep into corners. Union is of singular service, to any who are engaged in promoting the same common cause. It collects their wisdom, adds weight to their characters, and at the same time enlivens their zeal and fortitude. Indeed union in a good cause scarcely ever fails of success. Can we, therefore, answer it to God, or to ourselves, if we neglect to pursue those measures which we believe are wise and expedient, and would effectually check the progress of vice, and produce a reformation of manners? I mean not, however, to urge this point. I choose to submit this subject to your more private, deliberate, and solemn reflections. But if the measure which we have now suggested should surpass the strength of your virtue, yet there remain many other methods of restraining vice, which lie equally open to every individual. Be entreated then to act properly as individuals, and exert all the influence of your private characters and connections, to restrain the licentiousness of the times."

Similar remarks are found in many other discourses preached more than sixty



Digitized by Google

night;[1] so it is expedient to form religious associations within the bounds of a community whose members are homogeneous, and are naturally drawn together into social assemblages, but it is inexpedient to form religious associations, comprehending scattered communities whose members are heterogeneous, and are not drawn naturally together into fraternal convocations;—that it is difficult to mark out the precise line where the evil attending all artificial societies calls for public animadversion, and where the advantage attending them justifies their enthusiastic, unquestioning eulogy; but the general principle is apparent, that large societies, concentrating the religious power of our extensive domain, are far more perilous than smaller societies which divide the power between them, and serve as checks and balances to each other. Could he have foreseen that the National Societies which elicited his criticism, would so soon divide and subdivide into smaller associations, he would have indulged still more hope and still less fear respecting them. His objections apply to the societies as they *were*, rather than to the societies as they *are;* to them as they were *prospectively*, rather than as they are *historically*.

### § 6. *His Apprehensions of Evil from the General Associations of Ministers in a State.*

There was one religious association, however, which he pre-

years ago. As late as 1809, he printed in a pamphlet sermon, words like these: "There never have been in any age of Christianity perhaps, so many benevolent designs formed, to diffuse temporal and spiritual blessings among mankind as at the present time. The Missionary Societies, the Tract Societies, the Bible Societies, the Theological Societies, and the various species of Humane Societies, have greatly multiplied within these very few years. All these societies not only present opportunities of doing good, but loudly call upon all classes of men to contribute, in some mode or other, to the temporal and spiritual benefit of those who are suffering by a famine of bread, or a famine of knowledge, or a famine of hearing the word of the Lord. Let the rich, and all who enjoy a competency of the good things of life, improve these precious opportunities of giving from the purest motives and for the noblest ends. Let them everywhere contribute according to their abilities, for the comfort and relief of the poor, for the private and public instruction of youth, for the maintenance of ministers at home, for the support of missionaries abroad, and for the propagation of the gospel to the ends of the earth."

[1] In 1796, he wrote: "We often meet with doubtful cases in seeing, hearing, and reasoning; but we never infer from these, that there are no plain cases in which we know, that we see and hear and reason according to truth."

Digitized by Google

ferred to limit, not only within narrower boundaries than those of the nation, but also within narrower boundaries than those of a State. He favored the plan of Clerical Associations that are private and social, including the ministers of a County, or a similar District; but he reprobated the plan of Clerical Associations that are general, and comprehend all the District Associations of a Commonwealth.[1] He feared, that while a General Association disclaimed all *authority* over the churches, it would yet wield a silent authority over them; for the inclination of men is to attribute special power to a large convocation. He thought, moreover, that he detected tendencies in some well-meaning Congregationalists, to introduce various elements of Presbyterianism into the Congregational churches. He apprehended that, instead of confronting Unitarianism by argument, certain clergymen would become more and more inclined to confront it by church power, by an associational authority which would slide in slow degrees into a modified Presbyterianism. His memorable *dictum* was: "Associationism leads to Consociationism; Consociationism leads to Presbyterianism; Presbyterianism leads to Episcopacy; Episcopacy leads to Roman Catholicism; and Roman Catholicism is an ultimate fact."[2]

[1] The opinion which Dr. Emmons expressed a half century ago, is in some respects confirmed by Dr. James W. Alexander, who says: "May 28, 1859. Upon any fair calculation of probabilities, how likely is it that a promiscuous assembly at Indianapolis, will decide a question aright for the whole church? I have long looked in vain for any scriptural or rational foundation for supreme 'courts' having half a continent for their scope. This feeling of mine does not extend to Presbyteries." See Letters of Dr. Alexander, Vol. II. p. 288.

[2] He often reiterated the substance of this remark. He writes: "If we depart from the platform of church discipline, which Christ has given us in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, there is nothing in Scripture to prevent our being Presbyterians, or Episcopalians, or Papists." He writes again: "It seems to be a very general opinion, that churches can concentrate and increase their power by union. It is upon this principle of union, that a presbytery is supposed to have more power than a single church; that a synod has more power than a single presbytery; that the general assembly has more power than a single synod; and that the pope at the head of what is called the universal church, has more power than all other ministers and churches in the world. If the premises are granted, these consequences must follow. If churches may concentrate and increase their power by union, then an association may have more power than a single church; a consociation may have more power than an association; a synod may have more power than a presbytery; a general assembly may have more power than a synod; and the church universal, with his Holiness at their head, may have more power than all other churches and all other clergymen in the

Digitized by Google

The Mendon Association, whose acts are singularly identified with those of Emmons, has the following history in reference to the Massachusetts General Association:

"A communication from the Brookfield Association, dated March 22, 1802, was received, proposing the subject of forming a State Association, and inviting correspondence. Whereon it was 'voted, 8 June, 1802, to choose a committee to repair to Northampton, to meet the committees of other Associations, agreeably to proposals. Rev. David Sanford and Rev. Samuel Austin were chosen as committee.' Both these gentlemen attended the preliminary meeting at Northampton, July 7, 1802. The consideration of their report was deferred from October 1802, until October 1803, when, 'the minds of the Association being taken, whether they will accede to the proposal made to them, and send two delegates to the convention next June, the vote passed in the negative.' The motion of Rev. Dr. Lyman, of Hatfield, in the Convention of Congregational Ministers, May 30, 1804, to enlist that body in a general movement to the same end, and which was by vote of Convention referred to the district Associations, was also rejected by this Association. The subject again came up in 1807, by a letter from the scribe of the General Association, when the same vote of refusal was repeated. So the matter rested until April, 1841, when a vote of union was passed."[1]

"The chariot and horseman" of the Mendon Association had at that time risen to the skies; and it was no longer necessary to testify a reverence for his ancient opinions by remaining aloof from the General Union. Dr. Emmons had *virtually* succeeded, in all that he aimed to accomplish by resisting what he deemed the incipient tendencies of that Union. He had exerted an efficient influence against investing that Body with any remnant of Presbyterial power. He believed that when that Body was first projected, there were proclivities in certain minds, which would incline them to bring the Congregational Association into *such*

world. Congregationalists often complain of Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Papists, on account of their church government: but they have no reason to complain; for they act upon precisely the same principle, when they concentrate and increase their ecclesiastical power by union with associations, consociations, and ecclesiastical councils. When any church gives up its independence to any other ecclesiastical body, it gives up all its power. But Christ has given no power to churches which they may give away. Congregational churches at this day ought to be on their guard, and strenuously maintain their independence."

[1] Blake's History of the Mendon Association, pp. 52, 53.

Digitized by Google

a correspondence with the Presbyterian Assembly, as would at last result in a kind of authoritative union with it. As an independent scholar he dreaded any such union as would interpose the slightest check upon the sacred privilege of thinking and writing freely, and such as would diffuse among the churches of the Pilgrims that love of ecclesiastical rule, which had grown with the growth of the Scotch and Irish Presbyterianism, transplanted into the Presbyterian Church of the United States. He believed that if no General Association were formed, the tendencies of these Presbyterianizing Congregationalists would be effectually resisted; but if such an Association were formed, there would be danger of infusing certain Presbyterian elements into the Commonwealth where John Wise lived, and where men were free born. No man that is born of a woman can now decide, what would have been the present state of our churches, if the ecclesiastical patriot of Franklin who early learned that "the price of liberty is perpetual vigilance," had not stood up erect against the Presbyterian leanings of some Congregational divines. Long after he put his foot down against all authoritative Associations, one and another of our clergymen have openly avowed their preference for a stricter church *government* than now exists among us; and more than one attempt has been made to introduce the principles of Consociationism into the system which has made our fathers free. Each of these attempts has been crushed in its infancy, but it would not have been, we imagine, if the strong utterances of the Franklin pastor had not moulded the public opinion. "Beware of the Concision" was the watchword of Emmons and Spring, when they detected a longing for the Consociation.

Indeed some have supposed, that the highest service which Dr. Emmons ever rendered to the States of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont, where his writings were studied and his pupils were scattered, was in his resisting the tendency to subvert the established freedom of their churches. If any man will study the Proceedings of the General Association of Massachusetts during the years 1814, 1815 and 1816,[1]

[1] After detailing the *early* history of the Association, Dr. Joseph S. Clark observes: "The subsequent history of the General Association discloses many acts of great moment in their relation to Christ's kingdom, though the danger early pointed out of

Digitized by Google

and will read various Essays published in the Panoplist during those and the adjacent years, and if he will call to mind the interest felt by many Presbyterians out of New England in the ecclesiastical progress of Connecticut and Massachusetts, he will see that there must have been a strong power at work against the Presbyterianizing policy, or it would have prevailed. Men like President Kirkland, of Harvard College, considered that "strong power" as residing in the Franklin pastor more than in any other one individual. It is true that the Liberal Clergy resisted the movement for a virtual Consociation, but if Emmons and his school had favored the plan, it would, probably, have triumphed over the opposition of the Liberals.

### § 7. *His Apprehensions of Evil from the "Plan of Union."*

As Dr. Samuel Hopkins anticipated not much good,[1] so Dr. Emmons anticipated very much evil from the "Plan of Union" commenced in 1801 by the Congregationalists and Presbyterians with the special design of coöperating in our recently settled States. He did not believe that an ordinary house was large enough for two families. He believed that the "union" would be a "*union* indeed," all on *one* side.[2] He believed, that the rigid

treading upon ecclesiastical ground, has not been avoided in all their proceedings. Not always have the fundamental principles of Congregationalism been kept in mind when business, more pertinent to churches than ministers, has come up in these clerical meetings." — *Historical Sketch of the Congregational Churches in Massachusetts*, p. 241. The fact that the General Association have impinged so infrequently on the genius of Congregationalism, may be attributed in no small degree to the "sensation" caused by the outspoken sage of Franklin.

[1] See Memoir of Hopkins, p. 167.

[2] Dr. Emmons never condemned the Presbyterians for their attachment to their own system of government; but he condemned the Congregationalists for their *want* of attachment to *their* own. Dr. Ashbel Green gives the following illustration of the denominational zeal which has compacted the Presbyterian church, and the want of which has enfeebled the Congregationalists: "As early as the year 1799 [1809], Dr. Griffin, with whom I was then intimate, endeavored by letter to persuade me to take part with those who about that time were engaged in establishing the Theological Seminary at Andover, and to use my influence in favor of sending candidates for the gospel ministry in the Presbyterian church to that institution, for their theological education. This I refused, as calculated to lessen the attachment of our candidates to the Presbyterian church, and as derogatory to our denomination, which I thought ought to have, and would ultimately, I hoped, have a Seminary of its own." — *Memoir of Dr. Green*, p. 332.

Digitized by Google

government of the Presbyterians would prevail over the freer government of the Congregationalists, unless the two denominations kept themselves distinct from each other. He believed, that a sect which has an imposing machinery of rules and orders, would absorb a sect which is not thus barricaded with artificial laws, unless each of the sects maintained its own individuality. He believed, that it is easier to swallow a naked babe than a babe encased in steel. He believed, that when the lion lies down with the lamb, the lion has little to fear. He resisted the tendency of the Congregationalists to undervalue and relinquish their peculiar privileges, and to mistake an indifference toward their ancestral usages for a true catholicism. He did not look upon a liberal spirit as consisting in a disregard for the best system, but in an adherence to the best system and in charity toward its opposers. He respected the Presbyterians too much to think, that they would respect the Congregationalists for renouncing their ancestral privileges. He predicted ultimate contention from the plan of amalgamating sects which ought to be separate and fraternal; — separate in order to be fraternal. What he described in prophecy, has now been detailed in history; and multitudes who admire his penetration, repent that they had not followed his advice.[1]

[1] This far-seeing Congregationalist had perused such resolutions as the following, passed by the General Assembly and by various Associations in New England. He was startled by them; for when the Presbyterians obtained the right of voting in Congregational "meetings," he feared that our simple "meetings" would become mechanical structures. He regarded the following "orders" of the General Assembly, as a prelude to still more decisive and aggressive acts.

"May 16, 1794. On motion, Ordered, that the delegates appointed from the General Assembly to the General Association of Connecticut, propose to the Association, as an amendment to the Articles of intercourse agreed upon between the aforesaid bodies, that the delegates from these bodies respectively, shall have a right, not only to sit and deliberate, but also to vote in all questions which may be determined by either of them; and to communicate the result of their proposal to the next General Assembly." — (*Minutes of the General Assembly*, p. 80).

"May 22, 1795. Dr. McWhorter, laid before the General Assembly, an extract from the minutes of the proceedings of the General Association of the State of Connecticut, which, having been read, was ordered to be entered upon the minutes of the General Assembly, and was as follows:

"The motion of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church, that the delegates from that Assembly to this Association, and the delegates from this Association to that Assembly, be empowered to vote in all questions decided in those bodies

Digitized by Google

§ 8. *His Letter to Dr. Lyman.*

Four years previous to the union described above, of the Massachusetts Association with the General Assembly, Dr. Emmons wrote the following epistle to his classmate Lyman. He did not suspect his excellent classmate of an attempt to superinduce an autocratical authority over our free churches; but he did suspect that his good friend was advocating a policy which would result not merely in our receiving two Presbyterian votes every year, but in our imbibing the spirit of ecclesiastical rule, and the love of substituting *church decisions* for *arguments*. He apprehended that the Assembly and the Associations might eventually become one authoritative tribunal. He wrote of *results*, as if he had a clear sight of them in certain *tendencies*, and his Revolutionary spirit was on fire at the thought of "*strengthening*" the Congregational churches by giving up their individual power. Notwithstanding his habitual deference to the persons of his opponents, and his wonted courtesy in expressing his antagonism to them, he now writes with the spirit of a soldier:

FRANKLIN, February 9, 1807.

"DEAR SIR, — The Secretary of your last General Association has duly transmitted their doings to a member of our Association, which will be laid before them at their next meeting in June.

"I approve of your zeal and assiduity in promoting what you verily

respectively, was taken into consideration; and after discussion, the General Association voted a compliance with the said proposal." — (*Minutes of the General Assembly*, p. 96.)

The Minutes of the Assembly add (p. 462): "On the sixteenth of May, 1811, the delegates from the Massachusetts General Association made a proposal for uniting with the Assembly, and one article of the union was, that two delegates from each body should be annually admitted to the other, and should have the same right of sitting, debating, and voting, as was given to the other members of the body.

"The delegates stated that the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly was adopted as the basis of their union, and by answering several questions proposed to them, fully satisfied the Assembly relative to the standard of their faith, and the object of their Association: Whereupon,

"Resolved, unanimously, That said union be formed.

"And it accordingly was formed."

It was natural for such men as Emmons to inquire: Why did not the Congregationalists examine the Presbyterians; as well as the Presbyterians, the Congregationalists.

Digitized by Google

believe to be such a good and important cause. I wish I could see reasons to view it in the same light, and to unite my feeble efforts with yours in carrying it on.

"But admitting you have given me a fair and full representation of the basis, the design, the extent, and the desired and expected effects of your plan of union, still, I apprehend, at present, that more evil than good will finally result from it.

"I am very willing to submit my thoughts, upon this subject, to your candid and discerning mind. I fully believe, your extensive Association will eventually unite all the members in doctrine, discipline, and influence, by moral means, without the aid of civil authority to enforce their advice, resolutions, or edicts. It will soon be found who are the majority in regard to numbers and abilities; and these will be able and disposed to carry all points of controversy or difference in opinion respecting doctrine, discipline, and measures, according to their own pleasure. The minority must submit, or feel the weight of a body which can crush the influence and destroy the character of individuals. This will be the case, supposing the Association should continue to act according to their first and sincere design.

"But may not, and will not, corruption creep in among them, and warp them from the path of rectitude? Will not their union and strength create a thirst for more strength and more union? Did not ecclesiastical domination arise from this source in the Church of Rome, in the Church of England, and in the High Church of Scotland? I cannot but fear these evils will result from your united but heterogeneous body, when I consider more particularly its component parts.

"Though you and I call ourselves Calvinists, and that justly, yet there are very visible shades of difference in our religious opinions. In your body, there is a large number of my sentiments and a larger number of yours. Suppose they all feel as you and I feel, very tenacious of their own way of thinking. Will they easily unite? It is certain they cannot unite without mutual condescension, but who shall begin to condescend? My side fear if they give up one point, they shall only prepare the way to give up another. Your side have the same apprehension. But your side have the largest number and best abilities, and consequently will, beyond all doubt, carry their points. This would be the case, were there only two parties in the Association. There are more than two; there may be ten. There are some old Calvinists, some Hopkinsians, some Semi-Calvinists and Semi-Arminians, some Congregationalists, and many Presbyterians. These last, in respect to numbers, reputation, and talents, are superior to all the other members of



Digitized by Google

the union. Now, the professed design of this large combined body is to bring about a greater union in religious and ecclesiastical theory and practice. But this union will require a centre, and who will be that centre? Undoubtedly the Presbyterians; those of your cast will naturally unite with them in points of doctrine, and very easily in points of discipline; those of my cast must make greater sacrifices and give up their peculiar sentiments, in regard both to doctrine and discipline, to the Presbyterians. The Semi-Calvinists and Semi-Arminians, must come up or down, which you please, to the Calvinistic and Presbyterian standard. The final result will be a general union according to the immutable laws of Presbyterianism.

"But can it be supposed that this large body, which may comprise nine tenths of the clergy, will stop at this point? Will they not in time to come, as they always have in time past, endeavor to usurp authority over all classes, ranks, and orders of mankind?

"I know, you would not wish to be instrumental in producing such dire effects in church and state; and I can hardly believe you would be willing to meet some evils which you may experience in the proceedings of the Association in its present form. Should the Hopkinsian members gain the ascendency in your meetings, which in this part of the Union may happen, you might find yourself in an unpleasant situation. They might bear hard upon your creed, and propagate their own. But you do not expect they will ever gain superior influence in the Association; but I believe those who have joined you, expect it, and will labor hard to obtain it, though I think with you, they will be entirely disappointed. I consider the Association as not only calculated, but designed to overthrow Hopkinsianism. It would not be strange to me, if, in your zeal for orthodoxy and abhorrence of heterodoxy, you should generally unite in bearing down and even confusing the Hopkinsian members for their supposed heresy, not to say blasphemy. We know that the General Assembly at Philadelphia arraigned the President of Tennessee College, and condemned him for maintaining what they considered as Hopkinsian sentiments.[1] But you say there is no evil to be apprehended from your

[1] The Minutes of the General Assembly for May 28, 1798, contain the Report adopted by the Assembly in regard to President Balch. The Report specifies *among other things*, that "Mr. Balch is erroneous in making disinterested benevolence the only definition of holiness or true religion; because this may perplex the minds of those not accustomed to abstract speculations, is questionable in itself, and may convey the idea, that an absolute God, or, a God out of Christ, is the object of the highest affection to the renewed mind." . . . . The Report also states, "That Mr. Balch has confounded self-love with selfishness in an abstract speculation, calculated to puzzle plain Christians, and lead to unprofitable disputes." . . . . The Report

Digitized by Google

Christian and benevolent design. You may be right, or you may be wrong in your opinion. For my part, I do not wish to form a powerful engine which may do hurt as well as good, when I am sensible I cannot direct its operations. It appears to me, that all the benefits which you contemplate as arising from the General Association may be obtained without it; and all the evils I have mentioned, be happily avoided. The present clerical bodies may correspond upon all the subjects you propose, without being linked together by an indissoluble bond; and their mutual correspondence may collect all the information, and produce all the good ends that can be reasonably desired.

"I do not expect, that these observations will have the least influence upon your opinion which has been confirmed by practice; but I hope that they will convince you I have not acted, and do not mean to act, from mere caprice, in reference to a design which so many excellent men patronize and wish to promote. Nor is this all, for I ardently wish to excite your caution and zeal, to prevent, as far as it lies in your power, the evils which I think I foresee as arising out of a mode of conduct in the clergy that has always heretofore injured the cause of Christ, and oppressed some of his faithful servants. With this contrariety of opinion, "I am your sincere

"and constant friend,

"NATHANAEL EMMONS."

"Dr. LYMAN."

One may easily smile at the apprehensions intimated in the preceding letter, but one must consider the time when the letter was written, and the spirit of the parties to whom the letter relates. Many of the Presbyterians had indulged in the sternest

further states: "That in making repentance and faith to proceed wholly from love or charity, Mr. Balch has expressed an opinion unnecessary and improper." . . . . The Report concludes: "On the whole, your committee recommend that Mr. Balch be required to acknowledge before the Assembly that he was wrong in the publication of his creed; that in the particulars specified above, he renounce the errors therein pointed out; that he engage to teach nothing hereafter of a similar nature; that the Moderator admonish him of the divisions, disorder, trouble, and inconvenience which he has occasioned to the church and its judicatories by his imprudent and unwarrantable conduct, and warn him against doing any thing in time to come that may tend to produce such serious and lamentable evils; that if Mr. Balch submit to this, he be considered as in good standing with the Church; and that the reference and queries of the Synod of the Carolinas be considered as fully answered by the adoption of those measures."—(*Minutes of the General Assembly*, pp. 155, 156.)

Digitized by Google

philippics against the Hopkinsian scheme, and Emmons endeavored to prevent all occasion for transferring sharp words into sharp acts. As early as 1791, Dr. Ashbel Green wrote in his private diary:[1]

"Arrived at Mr. Austin's [Dr. G. refers to Emmons's brother-in-law at Worcester] about seven o'clock. He received me politely. He appears to be a man of real piety, and his wife is a very amiable woman. He has the reputation of being a new divinity man. The sentiments of this system I do not altogether like; but I have expressed myself in regard to it too freely and severely; let me be more cautious in future."

Emmons was fully apprised of Dr. Green's unsparing criticisms, but he had not been apprised of these honorable confessions. From the *data* which he did possess, he inferred that, sooner or later, an "*exscinding*" spirit would arise in the Presbyterian Assembly, and he wrote many nervous letters that he might forestall even the temptation to "exscind" the churches of New England. His aim was pacific. The result of such letters has been comparative peace. The children who are free, forget the perils and ridicule the anxieties of their fathers, who gave them liberty.

### § 9. *His Apprehensions of Evil from Protracted Meetings.*

In the year 1816, the Synod of Philadelphia published a Circular Letter, containing the following noteworthy paragraphs, which called forth a rebuke from the General Assembly on the twenty-fourth of May, 1817:

"The Synod, assembled in Lancaster at the present time, consists of a greater number of members than have been convened at any meeting for many years; and from their free conversation on the state of religion, it appears that all the Presbyteries are more than commonly alive to the importance of contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and of resisting the introduction of Arian, Socinian, Arminian, and Hopkinsian heresies, which are some of the means by which the enemy of souls would, if possible, deceive the very elect. The Synod desire to cherish a stronger regard for the truth as it is in Jesus, than they find at present subsisting among themselves: and because they are not ignorant of the disposition of many good men to cry 'peace,' where there should be no peace, and 'there is no danger,' in cases in which

[1] Memoir of Dr. Green, p. 217.

Digitized by Google

God commands us to avoid the appearance of evil, they would affectionately exhort each Presbytery under their care, to be strict in the examination of candidates for licensure or ordination, upon the subject of those delusions of the present age, which seem to be a combination of most of the innovations made upon Christian doctrine in former times.

"May the time never come in which our ecclesiastical courts shall determine, that Hopkinsianism and the doctrines of our Confession of Faith are the same thing, or that men are less exposed now than in the days of the Apostles to the danger of perverting the right ways of the Lord.

"The Synod would exhort particularly all the Elders of the Churches to beware of those who have made such pretended discoveries in Christian theology as require an abandonment of the 'form of sound words,' contained in our excellent Confession and the Holy Scriptures. . . .

. . . "Three or four of our Churches have experienced what is commonly called a revival of religion, and to them accessions of communicants have been numerous; but in many other congregations, a gradual but almost constant multiplication of the professed friends of Zion reminds us, that if the thunder storm in summer excites the most attention, it is the continued blessing from the clouds which replenishes the springs, and makes glad the harvest of the husbandman. For the many who are united in a short time, and for the many who are gradually gathered to Christ, not by the great and strong wind that rends the mountains, nor by the earthquake, but by the still small voice, which cometh not with observation, we would give our Redeemer thanks, and desire the churches to bless him, no less for the daily dew, than the latter and the early rain."

These extracts are here given not as proofs, but as intimations of the fact, that Hopkinsianism and Revivals of Religion were associated together; that the preachers of the New Divinity were regarded as the stirring, progressive men, innovators upon the practice, not less than upon the doctrine, of the more ancient Calvinists. The Synod of Philadelphia did not intend, in the foregoing paragraph, to disparage Revivals of Religion. Yet the Synod was reprimanded by the Assembly for a passage which "appears capable of being construed as expressing an opinion unfavorable" to them. Dr. Emmons, at one time, was suspected, in a similar way, of indifference to revivals of religion. His words were misinterpreted. The mass of men did not analyze. They judged by the gross. They drew large inferences from small premises. Like other Hopkinsians, Emmons was a friend of progress in doctrinal and practical religion. He was not a "man of bustle," but he was a "man of stir." He was a true revivalist. Professor Pond writes:

"Emmons was not what may be specifically called a *revival preacher;*



Digitized by Google

and yet he loved revivals of religion, and enjoyed special seasons of refreshing among his own people. Of his deep interest in revivals, I may notice an instance which came under my own observation. While I was a settled minister in Massachusetts, I received a visit, — the only one I ever received — from my venerated instructor. It was a time of general religious interest among my people. In the course of conversation, I stated to him some interesting particulars respecting the revival, and especially in regard to several very young persons who had recently indulged hope. The feelings of the good man were so much moved, that he almost wept aloud. The tears literally ran down his face, and fell upon the floor."

In what way did the rumor originate that Emmons was unfavorable to these religious excitements? It sprang from the fact, that he was among the first, and, so far as we know, he was the very first to prophesy evil from the Protracted Meetings which were so frequent thirty years ago. He uttered his predictions at the cost of his popularity. On this, as on other practices, he stemmed a tide of public opinion, and on this, as on other practices, he anticipated the ultimate judgment of men. Hundreds agree with him now, where tens agreed with him once. The multitude who reproached him for his stiff antagonism to "Protracted Meetings," have at length gone beyond him in their opposition to them. His clerical neighbor writes:

"Although there was a time when there was scarcely a minister or a church of his own denomination, or any other which favors revivals of religion, that did not in some way or other give them [Protracted Meetings] countenance, yet he uniformly and decidedly opposed them. He did not doubt that they might be instrumental of much present good. He listened with interest to the accounts which were given of the numbers suddenly awakened and convicted, and he candidly allowed that many by these means might be brought to a saving knowledge of Christ. But still he would say, 'they are an unauthorized measure, a human device, which will in the end do more hurt than good.' Among the evils which he feared, was an undue excitement, which would lead ministers to give a distorted view of the Gospel, by dwelling upon those points only which are suited to produce the greatest present effects; and the people to mistake the feeling of interest awakened by the peculiar circumstances in which they are placed, for genuine piety. He was afraid also, that these extraordinary meetings would create a disrelish for the common means of grace; and

Digitized by Google

that the performances of ministers invited from a distance for the occasion, being, of course, if not their most labored discourses, their most popular and interesting ones, would create dissatisfaction among the people with such sermons as their own pastor, in other circumstances, would be able to preach. He used to say that a dreadful reaction would follow these proceedings; that in some cases there would be great stupidity, and in others great restlessness among the churches; that many churches would be divided, many ministers dismissed, many souls deceived by the encouragement of false hopes, and many sinners turned away in disgust from the ministry of the gospel. He conceded that much might be done to prevent these evils, by peculiar wisdom and care on the part of those who had the management of the meetings. But still he contended, that they were a measure illy suited to the permanent welfare of the churches; a measure which the great Head of the church did not see fit to appoint, and which no degree of wisdom or effort on the part of men could render generally and permanently useful.

"How far he was right or wrong in the views which he entertained in regard to this subject, the public now have a better opportunity to judge than either he or they had, at the time when his opinion was expressed." [1]

[1] Dr. Ide's Memoir, pp. 51, 52.

Digitized by Google

# CHAPTER XI.

## HIS CONNECTION WITH THE CAUSE OF MISSIONS.

### § 1. *His Early Interest in Missions.*

As there were Reformers before the Reformation, so there was a missionary impulse before the commencement of the missionary enterprise. This diffusive spirit of Christianity developed itself, in an eminent degree, among the divines of the Hopkinsian school. They trace their principles to Edwards, the teacher of Brainerd, who was the companion of Hopkins and the townsman of Emmons. Proximately, they trace their distinctive views to the Patriarch of Great Barrington and Newport, who was the projector of an important missionary scheme, and the cherished counsellor of Samuel Spring, his pupil, and of Nathanael Emmons, his admirer.[1] His adherents were early imbued with his own missionary spirit. The following letter was dated May 25, 1798, twelve years before the origin of the American Board, and was addressed by Dr. Asa Burton, a well-known disciple of the Newport divine, to his old instructor, Dr. Levi Hart, who was the most intimate companion of that divine, and the preacher of his funeral sermon at Newport, R. I.

"You also desired me to give my opinion respecting the subject of Missions. [There is] no one who has a love for souls who has not an earnest desire for the salvation of the heathen, and the spread of the Gospel wherever it is not enjoyed. We also know that God works by means; hence we cannot expect miracles will be wrought to effect the spread of the Gospel through the world. Neither can we expect the Indians in America, or heathen in any other part of the world, will, before they are Christianized, do any thing to support the Gospel among them. If they will have it when sent to them, this is as much as can be expected while they remain in a state of heathenism.

[1] See Memoir of Hopkins, sections XXXII–XLI.



Digitized by Google

"How, then, can missionaries be supported? To send any considerable number, this support would amount to a large bill of expense. If money can be raised for their support, one obstacle is removed. Whether any considerable sum can be raised, cannot be known only by making the trial. If the attempt proves unsuccessful, the object had in view is not injured. I would, therefore, in that way thought best, make an attempt to raise money. If God should see fit to own and bless the attempt, might we not hope he would dispose the hearts of people to contribute liberally?

"When money is raised, another object, in my view, of great importance, is the choice of proper persons for missionaries. If persons should be sent who would make it one of their chief objects to make a fortune in some way out of those they are sent to preach to, their object would soon be discovered, which would most likely wholly thwart the design. If men of ability, men of knowledge, men who, wishing for no more of this world than enough to support them on their journey through it, desiring to be a means of the salvation of souls more than any thing, men of prudence, who would set an example also of Christianity in their lives; if men of such description can be found who would willingly offer themselves to the service, we might undoubtedly hope for success.

"But can men of this character, in any considerable number, be found, who would be willing to undertake in the business? I fear not. But few who are graduated at our colleges at this day follow the work of the ministry, and some of those who do, are not fit for it. I have sometimes thought whether it would not be beneficial to the spread of the Gospel for such gentlemen as Mr. Hart, Emmons, Dr. West, Dr. Edwards, and others, to set up schools of Divinity, receive none but those who give good evidence of sincere piety, and instruct them till they are fit to commence preaching. Many, perhaps, of this number might be found who would be able to defray the expense of their education, which would be finished in a shorter time than a College education.

"This suggestion you may think romantic, but there can be no hurt in having mentioned it. Indeed, what shall we do for pious ministers to supply vacancies in our own country, if some such method is not adopted, so long as our Colleges remain in such a state of degeneracy. The Baptists furnish a supply of preachers, and the Methodists. Where better men are not to be had, people will be more apt to hear and settle them. Thus the prevalence of these sects will be one effect, I believe, which will follow from the want of able candidates in the ministry. I have suggested these thoughts for your remarks, if you think them worthy of notice."

"*And I was transported with the thought of the unspeakable blessedness of the day when universal benevolence should prevail among all mankind,*" — this was the experience of Emmons during the first hour of his new life. It was a missionary, as well as a Hopkinsian experience. His bright hope of a millennium was a missionary hope. His doctrine of disinterested benevolence was a missionary doctrine. His favorite theorems that whatever God requires of men, God makes them able to accom-

Digitized by Google

plish, and that their free action presupposes their dependence, and their moral dependence presupposes their free action, are missionary theorems. The freeness of sin is essential to its guilt, and the guilt of sin develops the need of missions. His entire system of theology, with its equipoise of obligation and responsibleness on the one side; and, on the other side, of unconditional submission to that God all whose moral attributes are love, and who *therefore* worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, is a missionary system. Dr. Burton, who was a Hopkinsian, and yet on some points was an antagonist of Emmons, knew his missionary spirit, and therefore mentioned him in the preceding letter.

The sermons of Dr. Emmons contain frequent incitements to the missionary work.[1] Ten years before the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was thought of, he published a discourse from the text: "Be strong, therefore, and let not your hands be weak; for your work shall be rewarded." In this resolute sermon, he says:

"The zeal of the Lord of hosts *centres* in the execution of his purpose of grace towards this fallen world." — "Good men as well as bad, are able to do almost any thing which they think they are able to do. Difficulties vanish before resolution."—"The United States are abundantly able, in respect to numbers and wealth, to spread the Gospel through all North and South America. And we were, there is reason to believe, raised up and formed into a civil and religious community, to perform this service for God in grateful return for his distinguishing and protecting mercy."

"When a man, merely for want of resolution, does not perform any important work which belongs to him to perform, and which he has time, opportunity, and abilities to perform, we never scruple to say that he is guilty of negligence." — The friends of Christ "have long had time, opportunity, and ability, to perform the duty devolved upon them. But have they been faithful? Are there not many indubitable marks of their negligence? Does not the languishing state of religion, bear testimony to their timidity and indolence? Had they been bold, and zealous, and active in the cause of God, would there have been so many of the human race, at this day, involved in Jewish, Pagan, Mohammedan, and Papal darkness? Have there not been Christians in Asia? Why then has Asia been so long perishing for the want of Gospel light? Have there not

[1] See Original Edition of his Collected Works, Vol. VI. pp. 282–312, 435–447, etc.

Digitized by Google

been Christians in Africa? Why then has Africa been so long perishing for the want of Christian knowledge? Have there not been Christians in Europe? Are there not many there still? Why then is so great a part of that quarter of the world still ignorant of the pure doctrines of the Gospel? Has there not been a long succession of pious men in America? Why then are there so many of the aboriginals still perishing in their native barbarity and ignorance? Have we not many godly ministers in these United States? Why then are there so many declining churches, so many destitute congregations, and so many individuals abandoned to vice, irreligion, and infidelity?

"These are plain indications of negligence in the friends of God, for years, if not for ages past. Had Christians in every age possessed the spirit of the apostles and the primitive believers, what great things would they have done to promote the cause of Christ! Or, had they been as wise as the men of the world, and as zealous to promote the salvation of others, as sinners are to promote their temporal interests, the Gospel would have long since been carried to the ends of the earth. Or, indeed, if the same zealous, bold, and undaunted spirit, which has lately fired the breasts of Christians in Europe and America, had fired their breasts but a few years ago, the face of religion would have undoubtedly appeared, at this time, unspeakably different. Nothing has been wanting, since the revival of learning, the invention of printing, and the discovery of the magnet, to prevent the universal spread of the Gospel, but merely Christian resolution and zeal. This long and great negligence calls for the humiliation of Christians in general, and especially of Christian ministers and magistrates; who ought to have been the first in zeal and resolution to promote the cause of Christ and the spread of the Gospel. The world now looks like the field of the sluggard, because Christians, like the sluggard, have been crying, 'A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep.' The present melancholy state of Christianity throughout the world, reproaches all its friends for their past irresolution and negligence."

Such words as these, coming from a metaphysical recluse, were like the sound of a trumpet. They were the more effective because their author was known to be so thoughtful and diffident. They were uttered at Boston, May 27, 1800, in the first sermon ever preached before the Massachusetts Missionary Society. The Constitution of this Society was adopted May 28, 1799. It was the joint product of Emmons and his Hopkinsian friends. It affirms "The object of this Society is to diffuse the knowledge of the Gospel among the *heathens*, as well

Digitized by Google

as other people in the *remote* parts of our country, where Christ is seldom or never preached." The Constitution, as modified in 1804, affirms "The object of the Society is, to diffuse the Gospel among the people of the newly settled and remote parts of our country, *among the Indians of the country*, and *through more distant regions of the earth*, as circumstances shall invite and the ability of the Society shall admit." So this Board was really a Board of *Foreign* as well as of Domestic Missions. Of this Board, Emmons was one of the founders, and, for many years, one of the most energetic members. In the Memoir of Mrs. McFarland then a resident in Boston, she writes: — "During Election week in May, 1799, a number of ministers [Dr. Spring, Dr. Emmons, Mr. Sanford, and Father Niles,[1] as they call him], came to my mother's, and requested the use of that room to consult together about forming the Massachusetts Missionary Society. They met four or five times during the week, and then resolved to form the Society."

Dr. Emmons not only preached the first Anniversary sermon before this venerable body, but was annually elected its President during the first twelve years of its existence. He was so diffident, that he shrunk from this office, but, as was his wont, he practised self-denial in accepting a place of honor.

He was chairman of the committee who prepared its first Address to the public. Of the first two missionaries employed by the Society, one was his pupil, and the other was his clerical neighbor and intimate friend. He was one of the Founders and one of the original Editors of the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine,[2] which was afterwards united with the Panoplist, and

[1] See pp. 120, 121, above.

[2] The title-page of the first volume of the Missionary Magazine is as follows (it will be seen that all the editors, except one, were thorough Hopkinsians): "The Massachusetts Missionary Magazine, for the year 1803, containing Religious and Interesting Communications, calculated to Edify Christians, and inform the Rising Generation. The profits of this work are to be applied to the support of Missionaries in the new settlements and among the Indians of North America. The editors appointed by the Society are, Rev. Messieurs Nathanael Emmons, D. D., David Sanford, A. M., Daniel Hopkins, A. M., Samuel Spring, A. M., Joseph Barker, A. M., Samuel Niles, A. M., Samuel Austin, A. M., Abiel Holmes, A. M., Jonathan Strong, A. M., Caleb Alexander, A. M., Jacob Norton, A. M., Paul Litchfield, A. M., Elijah Parish, A. M. Vol. I. Salem: Printed by Joshua Cushing, for the Editors."

A writer in the first volume, pp. 410–413 of the Magazine, proposed that "a number

Digitized by Google

subsequently both were merged into the present Missionary Herald. He contributed many valuable articles to its pages.

In despite of all his opposition to National Associations, Dr. Emmons was particularly interested in the American Home Missionary Society. Before the Massachusetts Missionary Society became auxiliary to that National Board, he contributed thirty dollars to constitute himself a life member of it, and he continued to aid it with his pecuniary resources as long as he lived.

The early services of Emmons in evangelizing our waste regions have not been altogether forgotten. The Massachusetts Missionary Society had been in existence forty-two years, at the Anniversary meeting which followed his decease. It then paid to his memory a fitting tribute, which closes thus:

"In taking leave of one who stood as a connecting link between the present and 'ancient times,' it is cheering to reflect that this Society, from the day of its feeble beginning till the death of its first president, had dispensed the means of salvation in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Rhode Island; throughout all western New York, in parts of Pennsylvania and Tennessee, 'among the Wyandott Indians,' on the borders of Canada, 'in Nova Scotia,' and 'at New Orleans;' besides sustaining a hundred and sixty feeble churches in Massachusetts, and pouring into the treasury of the National Society many thousands of dollars to assist in carrying the gospel to every new settlement in the land."[1]

### § 2. *Connection of his Efforts with the Formation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.*

Rev. Dr. Ide of Medway, "was one of the original members of the Society of Inquiry on the subject of Missions, formed in the Andover Theological Seminary, January 8, 1811." He was a

of pious young men be trained to the [Missionary] business, under the immediate direction of the Missionary Society," and adds: "In the Colony at the Cape of Good Hope are two Seminaries for the education of missionaries. Such an Institution will probably be found a necessary appendage to every Missionary Society of importance." Here, as in Dr. Burton's letter above quoted, is found a germ of a Theological Seminary.

[1] Report of the Massachusetts Missionary Society for 1841.



Digitized by Google

pupil of the Seminary at the same time with Gordon Hall, Adoniram Judson, Samuel Newell, Samuel Nott, Luther Rice, Samuel J. Mills, James Richards, Edward Warren, Benjamin C. Meigs, Horatio Bardwell, Daniel Poor, and Alfred Wright, all of them among the earliest missionaries of the American Board. The following instructive reminiscences have been furnished by Dr. Ide.

"There are good reasons for believing that the missionary spirit, which manifested and diffused itself by means of the Massachusetts Missionary Society, was one principal source whence sprang many other benevolent Associations. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions owes its origin as much, if not more, to this, than to any other known instrumentality. At the time the Board was formed, and many years before, the Massachusetts Missionary Society was the most active and efficient missionary organization in the Commonwealth. The young men at Andover with whom the movement originated which led to the organization of the Board, were some of them the sons of men belonging to the Massachusetts Missionary Society, and may naturally be supposed to have imbibed the spirit with which their fathers were actuated. Previously to their efforts in behalf of foreign missions, these young men were known to be zealously engaged in promoting the object of the Massachusetts Missionary Society. They circulated the Address and Constitution of this Society, and made great exertions to procure signers to the Constitution and contributors to its funds. I myself received the Constitution and Address of this Society from the hand of one of these young men, with a request that I would circulate it as extensively as possible. I saw in other particulars their attachment to this Society, and evidence that it had exerted, and was still exerting, an important influence upon their minds. The object contemplated by this Society was *to evangelize the heathen*, as well as to supply the destitute among those who were before acquainted with the gospel. Its operations had already directed the attention of the then rising generation, in some measure, to this great object. It prepared its own members, as well as others, for still farther and more important efforts for the conversion of the world. Dr. Worcester, the first Secretary of the A. B. C. F. M., had long been an active member and able Secretary of the Massachusetts Missionary Society. Jeremiah Evarts, Esq., whose influence as Treasurer and Secretary of the A. B. C. F. M. was felt through the world, was once the Treasurer of the M. M. S., and the Editor of their journal. While we highly prize the more extended efforts which are

Digitized by Google

now made for the conversion of the heathen, and honor the men who bear a prominent part in this great enterprise, we ought not to forget the important services rendered to this cause, by those who exercised the self-denial and endured the labor of sustaining their feeble beginnings. It is impossible now to say, who will be found to have exerted the most important agency in erecting this glorious temple, the men who bear a part in elevating the top-stone to its place, or those who assisted in laying its foundation."

Confirmatory of this account, is the following statement of the biographer of Dr. Samuel Worcester:[1]

"None, probably, could have been better prepared to assume, if expedient, the responsibility of a foreign enterprise, than the leading members of the Massachusetts Missionary Society. And of the Board of Foreign Missions, Dr. Worcester more than once found occasion to say, that whatever good should be accomplished by this more recent and far more important organization, should be referred mainly to the Massachusetts Missionary Society, for the preparatory and formative action.

"The Trustees were not only in correspondence with the London Society and other kindred associations as engaged in a common cause, but communications to the Massachusetts Missionary Society from the missionaries at Tahiti, were actually on their way, at the time when the measures were adopted by the General Association of Massachusetts, for the formation of the Board of Commissioners."

### § 3. *The Influence of Hopkinsianism on the Early Friends of the American Board.*

The character of Emmons has not been appreciated, because his favorite scheme of doctrine has not been understood. His Memoir would be the Memoir of Hopkinsianism, were it not for the simple fact that Hopkinsianism is not dead. His elasticity of mind, his alert benevolence, his quick and quickening sympathies cannot be fully portrayed, unless we follow out the various ramifications of the influences under which he grew up, in the midst of which he lived and moved, and to the richness of which he added the fertility of his own mind. Although he

[1] Memoir of Worcester, Vol. II. p. 98.

Digitized by Google

was not a "man of affairs," yet he defended a system of doctrine which spurred men on to work the machinery of beneficence. The spirit of his system carried other men, further than it carried him, in the *outward* business of philanthropy. He lived *close to* certain lines of power that reached the extremities of the land. We wish that he had taken hold of some of these lines with a stronger grasp. But he was busy in maintaining general principles, which excited other men to practical details. *Non omnia possumus omnes.* The following appendant narrative is one illustration of the fact, that Emmons did not breathe an exsiccating theological atmosphere, and was not enamoured of a dried up scholasticism; but was joyful in the faith, that his New Divinity would be the fresh spring of new practical benevolence. It is a narrative of Hopkinsian agencies:

Preferring the structure of the Massachusetts Missionary Society to any national organization, Emmons had no direct agency in forming the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. If he had been what is termed a "politic" man, a "shrewd diplomatist," he would have been less frank in stating his fears, and more forward in proclaiming his joy, in relation to such Boards. His downright, open-hearted honesty is apparent here as everywhere. — The American Board immediately originated from the prolific minds of Samuel Spring and Samuel Worcester. Its genesis was as follows:

Dr. Worcester wrote at the decease of Dr. Spring: — "I did not know before, how deep an interest I had in that good man. In age he has been to me as a father; in action, for a course of years and in many interesting scenes, as a brother. About twenty years ago, we jointly united in forming the Massachusetts Missionary Society, and in the concerns of this Society we have acted together ever since. Nine years ago come June — passing in a chaise together from Andover to Bradford, we planned the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and have since been together in all its important deliberations and transactions." — *Memoir of Dr. Worcester*, Vol. II. p. 105.

Dr. Worcester afterwards wrote (Memoir, Vol. II. p. 106): On the twenty-sixth of June, 1810, "Dr. Spring took a seat in my chaise, and rode with me [from Andover] to Bradford, where the General Association was to convene. In the conversation on the way, the *first idea*, I believe, of the AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS was suggested; — the form, the number of members, and the name, were proposed. On the 27th, the question came before the Association; and the report of the committee which was adopted by that body, was the substance of the result of the conversation in the chaise."

Digitized by Google

The biographer of Dr. Worcester adds (Memoir, Vol. II. p. 46): "It is remarked [by Rev. Joseph Tracy] in the History of American Missions, — 'Dr. Worcester does not ascribe the honor of first suggesting this idea to his companion, as he would have done, had truth permitted, nor did his modesty allow him to claim that honor for himself. The truth probably is, that the suggestion was first made by Dr. Worcester, but grew out of their mutual conversation, and was perfected by their united counsels.'"

This remark of Mr. Tracy is conjectural. At variance with it is a remark of Professor Leonard Woods, who said in his Sermon at the funeral of Dr. Spring, a Sermon which was delivered and published while Dr. Worcester was still living: — "Dr. Spring acted a most important part in originating the Foreign Mission from America. The measures which led to the organization of a public body for the promotion of that great object, were first suggested by him. And in the whole management of that benevolent and successful undertaking, he was among those who were intrusted with the principal agency."

These records of individual effort are important, as illustrating the great truth, that our Missionary Boards resulted from the spirit of the age, under the influence of the Spirit of God; and that the spirit of the age had been affected by that system of theology which presented striking and impressive views of the voluntariness, and consequently the blameworthiness of sin; of our duty to cherish disinterested, unconditional submission to the Divine will; of our free activity in working out the decrees of Him who is our Monarch, our Sovereign, and whose entire character we may define by saying, "God is love."

That Samuel Spring, the inventive philanthropist, harmonized with his brother-in-law, Emmons, more nearly than with any other divine, and more nearly than any other independent thinker harmonized with Emmons, is a statement which will not be denied by any one who knew their habits of thought. There is a surprising resemblance between the sermons of the two men, so far forth as the shading of doctrine is concerned.

That Dr. Worcester was trained under the same influences which formed the character of Dr. Spring, is obvious from the ensuing facts:

He was a theological pupil of Dr. Samuel Austin, who with Spring belonged to the remarkable band of Emmons's brothers-in-law, and adopted the main principles of Emmons's theology. While pursuing his theological studies with Austin, the young student resided in the family of his brother, Leonard Worcester, a third redoubtable brother-in-law of the Franklin divine, and a co-laborer with Emmons, Austin, and Spring in defending the New Divinity. Worcester entered College in 1792; and in 1793, Rev. Eli Smith was ordained pastor of the church in Hollis, N. H. Dr. Worcester was a native of Hollis, a member of that church, and became an intimate friend of Mr. Smith, who was a pupil and a steadfast disciple of Emmons. (See Chapter XIII. § 6, below.)



Digitized by Google

When Samuel Worcester was ordained at Fitchburg, the sermon was preached by Dr. Austin, who spoke of himself and the young candidate as "agreeing, generally at least, in the same Christian sentiments." (Memoir, I. 201.) When Worcester was resettled in Salem, the introductory prayer was offered by the same Dr. Spring, whom Dr. Daniel Dana was wont to call an "ultra Hopkinsian;" the sermon was preached by Dr. Austin; the installing prayer was offered by Samuel Niles, another bosom friend of Emmons (see pp. 120, 121, above); the charge to the pastor was given by Dr. Daniel Hopkins, who is thought by some to have *suggested* more than his brother Samuel *originated*, of the Hopkinsian scheme; and the closing prayer was offered by the same Leonard Worcester, who with Spring and Austin belonged to that imposing phalanx of metaphysical brethren who married their wives at the Hadley parsonage.

(It is a singular fact, that Jeremiah Evarts, the second Secretary of the American Board, was in the year 1803 the preceptor of an Academy in the same Leonard Worcester's parish, and an inmate of this Hopkinsian's household.)

In the earlier years of his ministry, Dr. Samuel Worcester himself was regarded as a Hopkinsian. He writes (Memoir, I. 159), while studying with Dr. Austin, in 1795:

"You know, my friend, the outlines of my scheme of theological sentiments. I have not yet seen occasion to alter essentially. I shall doubtless be called a Hopkinsian; yet certainly I know no man, with whom I fully accord in opinion. You wish me to 'adopt Hopkinsian arguments, but Arminian manners.'"—"I cannot say that I am altogether well pleased with the manners of the Hopkinsian clergy; but you will excuse it, if I differ so much from you, as to think them at least as unexceptionable as those of the Arminians."—"A clergyman ought to be a gentleman. Do we find no gentlemen among the Hopkinsians? Must we look to the Arminians for a model? I think not. If the Hopkinsians as a body are too austere, are not the Arminians too loose?"

Worcester writes again from his native town in 1796:

"Mr. Smith, junior pastor of the church in this place, is what they call a Hopkinsian. He is high in the esteem and affections of a large part of his parishioners; but has many violent opposers, on account of his sentiments. Some, I believe, oppose his sentiments understandingly; but the most part raise a hue and cry against Hopkinsianism, while they know nothing of the first principles of the system. The points of doctrine, which, when insisted on, create the greatest uneasiness, are those of impartial or disinterested benevolence, personal election, total moral depravity, universal preordination, and efficient divine influence in the production of human volition. Upon these points of doctrine, Mr. Smith, as well as many others of his brethren in persuasion, treat frequently and elaborately. Perhaps they are dwelt upon too much; certain it is, they occasion warm controversies or loud murmurings in this quarter of the country, whenever they are preached.

"Most of the clergymen in this vicinity are what may be called modern or moderate Calvinists. They declaim loudly against Hopkinsianism and its advocates; nor, indeed, are Hopkinsians wanting in retort and pointed animadversion. And, what is truly ridiculous, each party endeavors to fasten upon the other, the opprobrious charge of Arminianism. It is, perhaps, difficult to ascertain the scheme of sentiments which the modern Calvinists would wish to maintain. Hostility on their part seems

Digitized by Google

to be rather offensive than defensive. They do not so much contend for any tenets of their own, as *against* those of their antagonists. They profess, indeed, to be Calvinists, yet they violently oppose the doctrines enumerated above. If there be any sentiment for which they contend, it is this, — that all kinds of sentiment are equally compatible with the Christian character. They talk much of Catholicism, for which they profess to be great sticklers; and labor by all means to fix upon the Hopkinsians, the imputation of illiberality and bigotry." — (Memoir, I. 167, 168.)

Dr. Worcester writes from his parsonage at Fitchburg, in 1797:

"What is to be my lot in this place, God only knows, and time only must declare. The aspect of things here, at present, is at least as promising for good, as it ever has been since my first acquaintance among this people. It was here as in most other places; violent and inveterate prejudices reigned predominant in the minds of by far the greater part. They were determined never to like a Hopkinsian. And I need not tell you what difficulties I have had to encounter, and under what disadvantages I have had to labor. But I believe their prejudices are, by this time, in a good measure destroyed. They begin to think that a Hopkinsian is not that *dreadful creature* they had contemplated." — (Memoir, I. 199, 200.)

We add the following statements:

While his parishioners in Fitchburg were contending against him, they accused him of adherence to the theology of his teacher Austin. — "The cry of *Hopkinsianism*, bigotry, intolerance, oppression, waxed louder and louder. Even the very children in some families became so accustomed to hear the word '*Hopkinsian*' pronounced in tones of bitter reproach and reviling, that they would employ it in their petty strifes and bickerings, as one of the very worst of *hard names* to characterize an object of their resentment." — (Memoir, I. 282.)

The biographer of Dr. Worcester remarks, that "Worcester's sermons at Fitchburg were more uniformly cast in the distinctive Hopkinsian mould, than those written at Salem." He had elaborated his Fitchburg discourses "with much attention to every quality, both of matter and of style. Great as was his temptation to draw upon them [while he was in his Salem pastorate], seven or eight years had passed away, before the temptation had become very troublesome. At length, however, he saw, as he thought, that he was in serious danger from this source. He gathered all those sermons together, and reserving but a small parcel, he committed the rest to the flames! When interrogated upon the wisdom of this sacrifice, he answered very seriously: 'I found that I was making *crutches* of them.'" — (Memoir, I. 210, 394.)

Still it is said by his biographer (Vol. I. p. 211), that "Dr. Worcester probably never adopted any article of belief, called Hopkinsianism, unless it was such as had been already recognized as a part of the theology of Edwards, or was a legitimate, and not an *ultra* inference from well-established facts and principles." This remark is in accordance with the general style of Hopkinsian writers, who claim Edwards as the defender of their first principles. Dr. Emmons would have made this remark with an added emphasis in regard to himself, and would have insisted that he, not *probably* but *certainly*, never adopted any part of Hopkinsianism unless it "*had been already recognized as a part of the theology of Edwards, or was a legitimate and not an ultra inference from established facts and principles.*"

Digitized by Google

The preceding items are sufficient to assure us that, notwithstanding the diversities of belief which will always distinguish independent minds, still the spirit of Hopkinsianism and of Emmonism had enkindled the two great lights which shone brightest upon the American Board at the morning of its life. It had also wrought more or less effectually upon the young men who became the earliest missionaries of that Board. This is evident from the following sketches:

Some writers have maintained that Adoniram Judson, though not the cause, was yet the first immediate occasion, of forming the new missionary scheme. He wrote the "*Statement* and *Inquiries*," which resulted in the vote of the Massachusetts General Association instituting the American Board. His personal appearance before that Association had a marked influence upon its members. Now Adoniram Judson was the son of a clergyman, who loved the character and imbibed the theories of Emmons. The enterprising young man, himself, adopted the same theories in his early youth. He defended them while he was a student at Brown University. He was an inmate there, in the family of a Hopkinsian Professor, and a pupil of Emmons. When young Judson lost his faith in the inspired word, he still believed that these theories were contained in it, and that some of them were true, even if uninspired. He continued to defend them after he became a devoted Christian in the Theological Seminary at Andover. He was approbated to preach as a Hopkinsian and an Emmonite. His first admirable wife, also, was an admirer and an earnest reader of Emmons. So was Harriet Newell, her friend.

Samuel J. Mills is believed by many to have struck out the first hint which resulted in our present Foreign Missionary organizations. His biographer goes so far as to say, that Mills "is justly entitled to the praise of originating the plan of that noble institution," the American Board. Mills was the son of a Connecticut pastor who was an intimate friend of Hopkins, and a beloved college-mate of Emmons. He was a champion for the "Litchfield County Divinity," a system cast in the Hopkinsian mould.[1] The conversion of the youthful Samuel J. Mills, was, in a peculiar degree, coincident with the Hopkinsian standard of practical religion. His early plan of Missions was like that of Emmons, in favor of the heathen on our own continent. His last effort for Missions was like that of Hopkins, in favor of the African negro.[2]

That Gordon Hall, too, another early missionary of the Board, was essentially a

[1] Rev. Abel McEwen, D. D., a few weeks before his death, wrote to me the following letter: "The theology of Mr. Mills of Torringford, was, in Litchfield county, called Calvinism. It was very nigh Hopkinsianism, save the posthumous, peculiar sentiments ascribed to Hopkins. Mr. Mills was enamoured of the doctrines of divine sovereignty and election, but careful to let nothing impair man's free agency. If Hopkins said that divine efficiency produced in man sinful action, Mr. Mills, I think, would not have said this. He eschewed the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to his race. Mr. Mills once said to me: 'They say,

"In Adam's fall,
We sinned all:"

They don't believe it, more than that' [here he quoted the old distich setting off the absurdity of the old theory]."

[2] See Memoir of Hopkins, pp. 164, 165.

Digitized by Google

Hopkinsian, is attested by many witnesses, and is confirmed by the following extract from a Doctrinal Essay which he wrote during his missionary life. After stating that holiness consists in benevolence, and sin consists in selfishness, he thus proceeds in regard to the benevolence of God:

"Benevolence desires the happiness of the whole; how then can it be reconciled to the misery of a part? The answer is at hand. Benevolence desires the greatest good of the whole. And if, on survey of the several parts, it be found that this good of the whole will be augmented by the misery of a part, benevolence demands the suffering. It demands this misery, not as in itself desirable, but because by it greater good will be promoted. In view of the evil which is apparent in the system, the benevolent mind reposes implicit confidence in the divine wisdom and goodness, believing that all things will ultimately work together for good.

"It is asked if, since a part must be miserable, the benevolent mind must or can consent to belong to that part? The question grates harshly upon the natural heart. Nor do I conceive the question to be of the last importance. . . . The benevolent mind must consent to the misery of a part, that the whole may be perfect. This suffering part must be fixed, bearing a certain proportion to the whole. It must likewise be composed of a definite number of individuals. To this the benevolent mind must consent. Now if the benevolent mind sees, that this suffering part cannot be secured to its exact proportion without its including himself, must he not acquiesce? And if he is unwilling to be included in this part, does he not place himself in opposition to the perfection of the system? The truth in this case, I think, cannot be mistaken. In the love of benevolence consists true holiness. The same representation comports with the account which God, in his word, has given of his own holy nature, and the nature of all who, through sanctification, are made one with him.

"'God is love.' This comprises all his moral perfections. This he displays to the view of the universe by creating and upholding all things, and diffusing the greatest possible happiness throughout the vast system of being."

"I am sure," says the Rev. Horatio Bardwell, one of our early Foreign Missionaries, "that Mills, Hall, Richards, and Rice were Hopkinsian in the type of their theology." "My mother and my minister were Hopkintonian (for that was the word); and when by the grace of God I was converted, I became one also."

Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury, D. D., the veteran missionary among the Choctaws, was nurtured under the immediate influence of the Franklin theology. He was a parishioner of Emmons's nearest clerical neighbor, Sanford (see pp. 118–120 above), and when the rich marble monument was recently erected to that remarkable orator, Dr. Kingsbury wrote:

Mr. Sanford, "that dear departed man of God, has a memorial in my affections more enduring than marble or granite. My hope of an interest in the merits of Christ, I owe to him, as an instrument in God's hand; and if I have ever been enabled to do any good to my fellow men, it is to be traced to him as the instrumental cause.

"When I was inquiring as to my duty in relation to the ministry, he said to me, 'Do not think of becoming a minister of the Gospel, if you are not willing to become a poor, despised man all your days, for the sake of honoring Christ, and doing good to the souls of men.' I have ever regarded the above as an instance of his faithful dealing with those who applied to him for counsel. After an experience of more than forty years, I am truly thankful that the Lord enabled me to prefer Christ and pov-

Digitized by Google

erty and reproach, to the riches, honor, and pleasures of earth. And now in my seventy-fourth year, I can say, 'Hitherto the Lord hath helped me, so that I have not wanted for any good thing.'"

Another early Missionary of the Board, Rev. Daniel Temple, once remarked: "I hear much said against the followers of Emmons. My pastor was one of them. I am one of them. I owe my conversion, under God, to their instrumentality. I have derived my chief aid from them in preparing for my mission. I find no men so conscientious in supporting my cause."

Similar words have been uttered by other men who left our Hopkinsian parishes, that they may practise in foreign lands, the disinterested benevolence which they had learned to exercise at home. It has been proverbially affirmed, that "Hopkinsianism saved the churches in Massachusetts." It is equally true, that it contained the germ of many a philanthropic enterprise for the world. That mission to Africa, which was projected by Samuel Hopkins, never ceased to exert an influence upon his theological school. As early as 1806, a parishioner of his brother, Dr. Daniel Hopkins, of Salem, gave ten thousand dollars for a Hopkinsian Theological Seminary, "because we must raise up ministers, if we would have men go as missionaries." In 1811, the widow of this parishioner, herself an intelligent Hopkinsian, gave thirty thousand dollars to the American Board, and thirty thousand to the Seminary at Andover. It was not without reason that, as early as 1803, Samuel Spring, the pupil of Samuel Hopkins, dedicated a brief eulogy on his teacher "to the public at large, who must gratefully review his zeal and exertions to promote the best interest of gospel missions among the heathens," and "to his attending angels who guarded his bed when he fell asleep." It was in the stirring spirit of this school, and in defence of its rousing principles, that Emmons thought, and wrote, and preached.

### § 4. *The Special Interest of Emmons in Home Missions.*

We have already seen, that this independent man had *his own* views of National Associations, and that the Massachusetts Missionary Society was his especial favorite. His missionary policy, perhaps, is what we might have expected from an aged and studious recluse, attached to the *old* processes of church and state, and peculiarly reverential toward the example of his townsman, David Brainerd.[1] In his Discourse on the Hopeless State of the Heathen, he says: "Is there nothing to be done, or can too much be done, to enlighten those immortal souls that are ready

[1] See pp. 8–12, above.

Digitized by Google

to perish? On whom does this labor devolve?—It particularly devolves upon Europeans to enlighten the European, Asiatic, and African heathens, and upon American Christians to enlighten American heathens." In his Constitution for the Massachusetts Missionary Society, he had his eye fixed upon the destitute regions of our own land, *then* upon the Indians of North America, *next* upon all the heathens upon our continent, *finally* upon the entire world. Dr. Ide says:

"Emmons was made an honorary member of the A. B. C. F. M., by Hon. Samuel T. Armstrong of Boston, February 28, 1827, and he always considered it an honor and a privilege to sustain this relation. He contributed to the funds of the Board, was deeply interested in the operations of this body, and devoutly rejoiced in their success. It ought not, however, to be concealed, that he was more engaged in Home than in Foreign Missions. He believed that American Christians are under special obligations to give their own countrymen a knowledge of the gospel, and that this is the most important measure they can adopt for the conversion of the world. He did not desire that less should be done for the propagation of the gospel in foreign lands; but he insisted upon the duty of doing more comparatively for the conversion of our own countrymen. It was his decided opinion, that the American church is farther behind her duty in respect to the supply of the spiritual wants of her own country, than she is in respect to the destitute of foreign lands. In reply to the assertions often made by those who conversed with him, that the more we do for foreign missions the more we shall do for our own country, he would often say, 'The reverse of that is true; the more we do to sustain the gospel in our own country, the more we shall do for its dissemination abroad.'"[1]

The extracts already taken from his sermon, preached sixty years ago, indicate his attachment to the *old* scheme which proposes, first of all, the evangelization of those men and tribes which are the nearest to us, and with which we have the closest alliance. When the *new* scheme was organized, making the Foreign enterprise more prominent than the Home enterprise, he had nearly reached the common limit of life, and was too old to cease from repeating his favorite maxim: "None will feel a proper concern for others, who do not feel a proper concern

[1] Memoir of Emmons, pp. 96, 97.

Digitized by Google

for themselves. None will be greatly engaged to promote religion abroad, who are not equally engaged to promote it at home. None have any encouragement to embark in the adventurous cause of propagating the gospel, unless their hearts glow with love to God, and a tender concern for the souls of men." Time has developed the harmony of the Home and the Foreign enterprise, and the rightfulness of special efforts for *either*, as an auxiliary to the other. If Emmons had not reached his sixty-sixth year when the American Board was formed, and if he had not lived so solitary a life in his rural retreat, he would probably have been more sanguine that the young Andover students, who urged their fathers to establish a Foreign Mission, would find their juvenile anticipations fully realized in history. He was not so quick as his classmate Treadwell, the first President of the American Board, to adopt a new plan started by young men. He was not, like Treadwell, a man of active commerce with the world. It is a singular fact, however, that Dr. James W. Alexander, in 1854, and in the fifty-first year of his age, formed an opinion of Foreign Missions which closely resembles that of Emmons in his old age. Dr. Alexander writes: "As we are cutting ourselves off more and more from the old world, and likely to carry out the Monroe doctrine, it seems to me that Christians in the United States are proportionally more bound to devise means of sending the gospel to Spanish America. Brazil is quite open, and New Granada nearly so. It seems to me that this, along with the black and red men, falls more justly to our share, than Hindoos, Nestorians, Druses, Arabs, or Turks."[1]

### § 5. *Influence of his Writings in Evangelizing our New Settlements.*

The chief contribution which Emmons made to the Missionary enterprise, he made through his pupils and friends. *He lived in them.* No one can read the history of his disciples without feeling that their instructor, whatever incidental objections he may have made to National as distinct from State organizations, had an anticipatory spirit, intent on evangelizing the world.[2]

[1] Forty Years' Familiar Letters, Vol. II. p. 204.
[2] See Chapter XIII. § 2, § 3, § 4.

Digitized by Google

Not by his pupils only, by his writings also, Dr. Emmons has accelerated the work of Christianizing our destitute settlements. His readers and admirers have been pioneers in spreading the gospel along the frontiers of our land. He often received letters from Christians whom he had never seen, residing in regions where he had never been, thanking him for the Missionary work which he was performing by his printed discourses. The following is a specimen of these letters. It was written to him as President of the Massachusetts Missionary Society, from the State of New York, and it enclosed a liberal donation for that Society.

"I embrace the first opportunity of communicating my sincere thanks to you, as an instrument in the hands of God, of convincing me of the truth, and establishing me in the belief of the doctrines contained in the Bible, more than I ever was before, or probably should have been, had I never read your sermons." "So far as my ideas of divinity are correct, it is in a great measure, if not wholly, owing to the light which I have received from reading your sermons on doctrinal subjects, and of course I feel myself very much indebted to your labors and study."

Many similar epistles he received from New Hampshire and Maine, whither his pupils carried his decisive influence,[1] and where his printed sermons were found on the old mantel shelves before other books had become accessible. Some intensely interesting communications came from East Tennessee, where there was a Hopkinsian development which is itself a history. A brief notice of this development is essential to a full portraiture of Emmons. His face is reflected, though in a somewhat wrinkled aspect, from the troubled waters of that western State. Some have wondered why so many clergymen and laymen in Tennessee, with their vehement opposition to anti-slavery, united with the New School Presbyterian body when it dissolved its connection with the Old School Assembly. The cause is found in the influence which Hopkins, Spring, and Emmons, exerted upon that distant settlement, more than sixty years ago. The following appendant sketches claim a place in the Memoir of the still metaphysician, for they illustrate the character of the

[1] For the indebtedness of these States to Dr. Emmons, see Chapter XIII. § 3, § 4.



Digitized by Google

"theological news" which flowed into his parsonage from year to year, and cheered his solitary toils.

### Rev. Hezekiah Balch, D.D.

This divine was born in Maryland in 1741, graduated at Nassau Hall in 1762, emigrated in 1785–6 to that part of the western wilderness which is now called Tennessee, and having been installed pastor of the first Presbyterian church in Greenville, originated the plan of Greenville College in 1793, and was elected the first president of the College in 1794. At one period of his presidency, this college "had students from nine different States and Territories, and a more than usual proportion of them rose to honorable eminence in the different walks of life."

In 1795, this resolute thinker visited New England, became acquainted with Dr. Samuel Spring and Dr. Emmons, and his favorite college received from them and from their opulent friends, valuable contributions in money and in books. Dr. Balch stated to his friend, Dr. Coffin, "that it was impossible for him to travel under the rare advantages of improving conversation with the most enlightened ministers and other Christians, which he enjoyed, while soliciting for the college, without an earnest spirit of theological inquiry. 'This,' said he, 'the great and good Dr. Green of Philadelphia did much to invigorate and direct by his kind and brotherly counsels to me on my way to the North, for which I have ever been thankful.' He told me that I would find, as he did, in the Northern States, a class of ministers, some of whose religious sentiments were considered erroneous, while their main tenets were unquestionably Calvinistic. He advised me by all means to become acquainted with these men. 'I do not myself agree with them,' he said, 'in every thing; but in some things which are questioned, I know they are right. I found reason to esteem them as among the most laborious students, faithful pastors, successful preachers, and instructive writers in all New England.' 'Now,' added Mr. Balch, and often did he take occasion to repeat it in my ears, — 'these were the very ministers who most assisted me to obtain donations; and who afforded me, by conversations and books, my principal helps in the investigation of religious truth.' He informed me that he preached, of course, boldly and explicitly on his return, his most illustrative thoughts on gospel doctrines, as had ever been his way; keeping nothing back of the whole counsel of God; fully persuaded that he had learned better to understand it by his opportunities of receiving additional light. 'I took pains,' said he, 'to assure ministers and people, privately and publicly, that I believed more firmly, because more intelligently, than ever before, the cardinal doctrines of free and sovereign grace, which I had so long preached; but I blessed God, He had led me into a clearer knowledge of them all in their inspired meaning and essential harmony; that I felt myself able to unfold them, and defend them in a more consistent manner, and to preach the truth on one topic, without taking it back again, when discussing another.'" [Here we see the favorite thought of Dr. Emmons, that Hopkinsianism is "*consistent* Calvinism."]

Dr. Coffin continues his narrative (Sprague's Annals, III. 313, 314): "As to the views which rendered Dr. Balch obnoxious to many of his brethren, it is impossible, in so brief a space as is allotted to me in this letter, to go into detail. It will perhaps be sufficient to say, that he sympathized with that class of New England divines, who were, and still are known as Hopkinsians. His most familiar and favorite sentiment was, that all true holiness, both in God and his intelligent creatures, consists in im-

Digitized by Google

partial, disinterested good-will, love or benevolence to all beings capable of happiness; and a benevolent complacency in the moral excellence of all who possess this essential qualification for happiness, and for promoting its diffusion.

"The first impression which his preaching made upon his church and large congregation after his return from the North and East, as I received abundant evidence from many of them, was very generally favorable. But alarms were gradually excited among his people, and in due time, when he thought the case required it, he was heard by his Presbytery, — that of Abingdon; before whom he stated what were his views of Divine truth, which he fully believed were vindicated both by the Bible and the Confession of Faith. So satisfied were the majority of that body that he embraced nothing heretical, or dangerous to the souls of men, that they passed a vote to this effect; and agreed individually to do what they could to quiet any alarms existing among his people."

In the year 1800, the indefatigable President wrote thus to his friend Coffin, urging him to become a pioneer in evangelizing the new settlements in Tennessee: "Since my return from New England, sir, I have been cited to ecclesiastical trial for errors imputed to me by my prosecutors, sixteen times before Presbytery; four times before Synod; and once before the General Assembly. I had not far short of one hundred scholars in the College. But my interruptions and absences to attend my trials, arrested the progress of the Institution. The students were obliged to go home. Nevertheless, sir, all that I have suffered has only served to confirm me more and more in the belief, that what I have contended for is God's Bible truth, and will stand forever. My prosecutors have never yet taught me the doctrine of fear. Come over, sir, and I hope God will so order it that you will fall in love with our country." (Sprague's Annals, III. 313. These difficulties of President Balch are noticed by Emmons on p. 170, above.)

When he was on the confines of death in 1810, this intrepid President, "looking up with tears towards heaven," solemnly remarked to Dr. Coffin: 'Sir, I cordially submit to the righteous sentence of God's eternal law; the precepts of which I have no apology for breaking. At the same time, I trust I have a little — oh! how little, of that holy disinterested love which makes the life of justifying faith in Christ; that love, sir, that will bear the examination and meet the approving smile of the great Judge of quick and dead.' "Even in his last will and testament" [adds Dr. Coffin], "he gave his soul to his God to be made for Christ's sake, in boundless grace, an eternal vessel of mercy in heaven, or, in righteous judgment for his sins, a vessel of everlasting wrath in hell; just as seemed good in his sight." — I said: 'Mr. Balch, will all who may read your will, understand your unshaken hope of salvation through Christ?' 'Sir,' said he, 'I cannot allow myself to make conditions with God; to him I cordially submit, without any reserve, for time and for eternity. Let the words stand, sir; they show me the only way in which I mean to die. Those who have heard me insist on unreserved submission, as always involved in saving faith, may learn the importance of it in their own case, when they find how I choose to die.' So, therefore, [adds President Coffin], the words now stand in the Register's office in Greenville." — (Sprague's Annals, III. 319.)

This marvellous will and testament, no parallel to which can be found, perhaps, in any Register's office on this globe, indicates that the General Assembly had some reason for censuring the President's "improprieties and imprudences of speech." He acknowledged, before his judges, his ill-considered words, and submitted humbly

Digitized by Google

to the censure of the Ecclesiastical Court. He did not retract his Emmonism, but those methods of expressing it which were injudicious. He was doubtless misunderstood by the Assembly, and he was doubtless an imprudent, though a brave and stalwart man. It was a felicitous remark of Emmons (p. 170, above), that the Assembly censured the President "for maintaining *what they considered* as Hopkinsian sentiments."

This use of the word "sentiments" suggests a philological curiosity, contained in one of the Assembly's charges against the President of Greenville College. His censors declare (see Minutes of General Assembly, p. 154), that "Mr. Balch appears to confound sentiment with the mere perception of truth, whereas it always partakes of the disposition of the heart, and consequently involves either sin or holiness." President Balch derived this use of the word sentiment partly from the New England divines, and particularly from Emmons, who says that our Lord "did not preach *superficially* but sentimentally," and that the good pastor's discourses are "more sentimental than declamatory."[1] Seldom did it occur to the Franklin recluse, that his use of the word *sentiment* for *doctrine*, would agitate the theological waters of Tennessee and of the whole Presbyterian Church.

## Rev. Charles Coffin, D.D.

This divine was named by Dr. Archibald Alexander, on p. 126, above. He was born in Newburyport, Mass., August 15, 1775, and died June 3, 1853. Dr. Daniel Dana says of this highly finished scholar: "Soon after leaving Harvard College, he raised a trembling eye to the ministry, and commenced the study of Theology with my father at Ipswich. The minister of his parents was the Rev. Dr. Spring, of this place, whose religious views were, as you know, decidedly and strongly Hopkinsian. But though such were not the early views of the young man, there occurred, afterwards, a great revolution in his mind. He finished his studies with Dr. Spring, and becoming a candidate for the ministry, was viewed as one of the most acute and able defenders of the new system which he had embraced."—(Sprague's Annals, IV. 249.)

In 1800, Dr. Coffin visited the State of Tennessee, and while there "became much interested in the prosperity of Greenville College; and the conviction which he felt of the importance of having the number of competent teachers, as well as ministers of the Gospel, greatly increased in that newly settled Western country, gave direction to his future course in life."—(Annals, IV. 247.)

In 1803-4, "he was occupied for a considerable time in soliciting funds [in New England] for the endowment of Greenville College, of which he had now become Vice-President." Having devoted his energies to the building up of the College until 1810, he was then, at the resignation of Dr. Balch, elected its President, and having served it faithfully in this office until 1827, he "accepted a call to the Presidency of East Tennessee University, at Knoxville," where he remained until 1833. Some of his correspondence with the Massachusetts Missionary Society is still preserved in the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine, and in the Panoplist. He was an enthusiastic reader and admirer of Emmons, and received from him much aid, not only in doctrinal instruction, but also in philanthropic enterprises.

[1] See p. 74, above. It is not pretended that this use of the word is *peculiar* to the New England, or even to the American divines; but the *frequency* of the usage is peculiar to them.

Digitized by Google

### Rev. Robert Henderson, D.D.

The two Presidents, Balch and Coffin, had a stalwart coadjutor in Dr. Henderson, whose rhetorical "fire and occasional flights of terrible grandeur" are highly celebrated by those who knew him. He was born in Virginia, May 31, 1764. His first wife was the eldest daughter of President Balch. He labored as a preacher and instructor, until July, 1834, when he died amid the lamentations of multitudes. Dr. Anderson writes of him (in Sprague's Annals, III. 531), that although he abounded with oddities, he "was still eminently useful, and is remembered by the aged Christians of East Tennessee with the most affectionate respect."

### Rev. Gideon Blackburn, D.D.

Drs. Balch, Coffin, and Henderson were happy in the coöperation of Dr. Blackburn, who, born in Virginia, August 27, 1772, became conspicuous throughout the land, as a Christian pioneer in our western regions. He had been under the tuition of Dr. Henderson, and he shared in the doctor's love for the divines of New England. His correspondence with the Massachusetts Missionary Society is noticed in several volumes of the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine and the Panoplist. It is a singular fact, illustrating the diffusive nature of personal influence, that this Western missionary was active and useful in promoting the union between the Hopkinsian and the Calvinistic parties in the Andover Theological Seminary. From 1827 until 1830, Dr. Blackburn was President of Centre College, Danville, Kentucky. He was an important co-worker in establishing various literary institutions at the West, and was the originator of the scheme which has now resulted in founding the Theological Seminary at Carlinville, Illinois. After forty-six years of hard service, he died at Carlinville, August 23, 1838. Rev. J. W. Hall, D.D., who knew Dr. Blackburn well in the vigor of his manhood, says of him: "Hopkins, Bellamy, Strong, Emmons, and Edwards, were his favorites when I knew him. His three oldest sons were named Newton, Hervey, and Emmons." (Annals, IV. 53.)

Dr. Blackburn belonged to the puissant band of Tennesseeans and Kentuckians, who guided the controversies leading to the disruption of the Presbyterian Church in 1837. The Hopkinsians "stood in solid phalanx to resist the usurpation of the exscinding majority. Every shot they fired did execution."

### Rev. Isaac Anderson, D.D.

He was born in Rockbridge County, Virginia, March 26, 1780. He received his academical education at what is now called Washington College, and what was then known as Liberty Hall Academy. Here Dr. Archibald Alexander, Dr. Baxter of Virginia, Dr. John Holt Rice, and Dr. Conrad Speece, were trained academically. He pursued his theological studies in part, with Rev. Gideon Blackburn, D.D. In 1802, he was ordained pastor of Washington church, in Knox County, Tennessee. In 1812, he was installed pastor of New Providence Church, Maryville, Tennessee. "For a period of fifteen years, there was a revival [of religion] in his congregation every fall or winter." "He has been considered as the first to establish what is called the 'anxious seat.'"—(Memoir of Dr. Anderson, p. 119.) "The late Dr. Allan, of Huntsville, Alabama, after hearing him on a certain occasion, said: 'I have been in Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, and have heard their greatest speakers: I have been in Liverpool, London, and Manchester, and have listened to the preaching of their most distinguished men; but that man (pointing to Dr. Anderson) is the greatest man I ever heard.'"—(Memoir, p. 124.)



Digitized by Google

This athletic preacher took a strong hold of whatever he touched at all. For instance, he was so thoroughly aroused in favor of the Temperance reform, that one of his theological opponents — Rev. Daniel Baker — wrote of him in 1843: "Among other things, he has abolished the use of wine at the Sacrament, and uses raisin-water."

Dr. Anderson was a severe and indefatigable student, and particularly noted for his untiring beneficence. He performed a great amount of missionary labor in the western country. He was peculiarly beloved and trusted by the Indians. Through life he was eminent for his self-denial, especially for his pecuniary sacrifices in the cause of learning and religion. In 1819 he visited the Theological Seminary at Princeton, "hoping to induce some of the young men who were about to enter the ministry, to come to East Tennessee. Quite a number of them, at his request, met him in his room at the hotel." After a lengthened description of the country for which he asked their services, he "put the question plainly: 'Will not some of you go with me, and help me to preach the gospel there?' The first question asked, in reply to this was: 'What salary do they pay their ministers?' *Such* a question addressed to *such* a man as Dr. Anderson — a man who had toiled and labored without money and without price — whose own hands had ministered to his necessities, while preaching the gospel — aroused his indignation, and he replied, 'Go *there* and ask such a question, and as ministers of the Gospel you are ruined.'"—(Memoir of Dr. Anderson, p. 53.)

This was the true ring of the metal of the man. His failure to secure pastors of the churches in East Tennessee, induced him to lay there the foundations of a Theological School. He collected in 1819–20, a class of five young men, one of whom was Rev. Dr. E. N. Sawtelle, and this was the first class in what is now Maryville College. He established a boarding-house, and sometimes provided for fifteen or twenty young students in that Charity Home. He solicited for it donations of food and clothing. "One day a letter came from the celebrated Dr. Emmons, inclosing seventy dollars; and stating, that he had understood he was engaged in educating young men for the ministry, and he had sent a few dollars to aid in the good work."—(Memoir of Dr. Anderson, pp. 56, 95).

Persevering through obstacles which would seem insurmountable to many, and relying on the unforeseen aids of Providence, this eloquent pleader effected, at last, the permanent establishment of his Seminary; and he was inaugurated its first Professor of Didactic Theology, September 25, 1822. For several years, he gave his instructions without a salary, and at the same time furnished gratuitous board to many indigent students. His course of theological discipline bore striking resemblance, in many respects, to that of Dr. Emmons. His Seminary was violently and virulently persecuted. It was called "the nest of Hopkinsians." He says: "The doctrines of President Edwards, of Dwight and Strong, and old Dr. [Samuel] Spring, and writers of this school, are the doctrines taught here."

Early in the morning of the seventeenth of March, 1856, Dr. Anderson's house was consumed by fire. He himself had a narrow escape from the flames. As the old man of seventy-five years was borne away from his falling edifice, he uttered not a word except this: "*My library is burned up.*" His biographer adds: "Not a book nor a manuscript was saved; not even a Bible." The loss of his Theological Lectures and Correspondence is to be more deeply regretted, than the loss of his books. These Lectures contained a vigorous defence of the Hopkinsian peculiarities.

Digitized by Google

This energetic pioneer was employed as a teacher during a large part of a half-century, and was a theological instructor during nearly all of his last thirty-seven years. He died at Rockford, Tennessee, January 28, 1857.

### INFLUENCE OF THE MINISTERS NAMED ABOVE.

This influence is indicated in the following words of a Southern clergyman who evidently does not adopt all the Hopkinsian theories:

"I was a gay, young Virginian, and felt myself buried there [in East Tennessee]. I had no society. To spend time, I was wont to attend the occasional ministrations of the Methodist itinerant, and to visit an old Presbyterian and his wife, a few miles away, who took much interest in me, — a Mr. and Mrs. David Kinkeade. This old gentleman and lady were called Hopkinsians, a phase of Presbyterians who then and for a long time before, had divided East Tennessee with the Old School; and ultimately became the New School in that region. It was hard to tell whether the husband or the wife was the most thoroughly versed in Edwards, Hopkins, and Emmons; and strange, their society, wholly of this metaphysical tone, became a perfect charm to me. I spent days with them contesting the extremes of Hopkins and Emmons. I see now the little old man with his very short legs, waddling to get the candle-stand, and piling it up with Hopkins's huge volumes — then seated in his great old-fashioned chimney corner, spectacles in one hand, pipe in the other, he would look at me with his piercing little black eyes, and press some '*nice pint*' of disinterested benevolence. The old lady, tall and angular, on the other side of the hearth, — with pipe and spectacles too, would nod assent to the hardest paradoxes of Emmons, and hope and believe from her very heart that, some day, I would see the beauty of these '*new ideas*.' It was on one such occasion, after little Davy, as he was called, had read to me with exquisite delight, a sheet of his own poetry, — in which he made Satan before he fell, consent that God might for his glory influence him to sin[1] — that Polly, the wife, said with real affection for me, 'I wish, Mr. Ross, you would just ride down to New Providence next Sunday, and hear Mr. Gallaher. *He* is *my* preacher, and you can't help liking him.' 'Yes,' added the old man, 'you must — Gallaher is not quite up to these "*nice pints*" yet; but he is a great preacher.'" — (Annals, IV. 535.)

The "great preacher" here named is the celebrated James Gallaher, who published the "Pilgrimage of Adam and David," and the "Western Sketch Book." He was also an editor of the Calvinistic Magazine, which was in the general features, in the substantial elements of its character, Hopkinsian. His friend, Dr. David Nelson, another revival preacher, and the author of a noted work entitled, "Cause and Cure of Infidelity," shared with Mr. Gallaher in the Hopkinsian influences of the four instructors named above, although neither of these revivalists adopted all the peculiarities of either Emmons or Hopkins. These peculiarities, however, were adopted by many athlete preachers in that community of strong men. A clergyman who well knows the community, makes the following allusion to one of the negro metaphysicians who loved the "nice points" of Hopkins and Emmons.

"In that house, and under those trees, fifteen persons were organized [in 1820] into a Presbyterian church, — the same to which I afterwards preached nearly thirty

[1] Any doctrine whatever, if stated loosely, may suggest a false idea, and if stated playfully, may suggest an irreligious sentiment.

Digitized by Google

years. The officiating ministers on the occasion were Dr. Coffin and Rev. George Erskine. And strange as it may sound to our abolition brethren, Rev. Mr. Erskine was an African negro, as black as ebony. There he stands preaching, — a large man with strong, good face, — of decided talents, giving a masterly sermon in the vigorous old Hopkinsianism and manly style of the Rev. Isaac Anderson of Marysville, by whom he was educated. He was on his way to Liberia, where he died very soon, in the morning of his usefulness. I remember only that sermon, and one of Dr. Coffin's, the next day, — the Sabbath, and the first communion occasion in that little flock." — (Sprague's Annals, IV. 254.)

In a letter dated May 6, 1807, President Coffin writes concerning John Gloucester, another ebony Emmonite, and a pupil of President Balch: "He is indeed a genius, an orator, a man of modest and engaging address, well acquainted with genuine good breeding, and, we trust, of more than usual Christian experience. White people think the word of God comes with power from his black lips."

The question may now arise: What is the present result of all these Hopkinsian controversies in Tennessee and Kentucky. A distinguished southern clergyman affirms: "It was a struggle between New England Metaphysics and Scotch Irish Presbyterianism — having all the energy of thought, and all the obstinacy of prejudice belonging to the men, the times, and the country. The storm was pretty well over before my day. Still I lived ministerially, so soon after the lull, that I had much of the agitation of the elements, the flying dust, the leaves, the torn branches, and other fragments of the war around me."

It must be remembered that some of the Hopkinsians and some of their opponents were the Principals of Colleges. The strife, then, was mingled in its motives, I fear. The horses of Achilles had names different on earth from what they bore in heaven. So, it is a question not settled among the curious in such matters in East Tennessee, whether that controversy was regarded by the All-Seeing, as wholly a work of "Disinterested Benevolence" on either side.

These Hopkinsian views "gave tone ultimately to the New School theology, throughout the Synod of Tennessee, covering a wide extent of country. They were, it is true, greatly modified in different minds. In many, they were denied in form. Nevertheless these sentiments moulded, in fact, the *thinking of men*, and gave triumph to the New School in much the greater number of churches in the region indicated."

The Hopkinsian "controversy, together with various Methodist discussions, has made East Tennessee the most thoroughly instructed portion of the North-west," in regard to religious doctrine.

Another southern theologian writes: "The churches of [East Tennessee], generally, for a time preferred the ministers of the more liberal views, as Hopkinsians were often called, and on this account [these ministers for a time] controlled the church in all this region." "It cannot be denied that [their] form of speculation had great power for good."

"Not a few Presbyterian brethren in the State of Kentucky," writes an aged divine, "sympathized and acted with the Hopkinsians of East Tennessee. They were the friends and pioneers of all missionary enterprises" in that region.

Digitized by Google

# CHAPTER XII.

## HIS INTEREST IN THE CAUSE OF EDUCATION.

### § 1. *An Example of Individual and Indirect Influence in educating Men.*

THE preceding narrative has been inserted as an illustration of the fact, that some of the most thrilling events connected with the labors of Emmons, were *indirect* results of those labors. He sat at his desk, and his words moved a distant wilderness. He was engaged, through life, in educating men and women and children, but he educated them with a still, small voice. "Franklin must be the centre of my world, and my study must be the centre of Franklin," was his motto. In his parish he worked on those who *came to see him.* In all the great movements of the day, he exerted his influence on men who *came to see him.* His written words, too, had an educating power. They were perused emphatically for "doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

Rev. Joel Hawes, D. D., who was nurtured in the parish adjoining that of Emmons, has thus illustrated the quickening influence of the divine, from some of whose theories the Hartford pastor dissents:

"My acquaintance with Dr. Emmons was of course never intimate. Having friends residing in Franklin, I occasionally spent there a part of my vacations in Brown University and in the Andover Theological Seminary, and I always regarded it as a rich treat to hear him preach and visit him in his study. He had a rare faculty of making me feel at home with him. There was something so kind, genial, and lively, in his voice and look, and manner of conversation, that he drew me close up to him and made me feel entirely at ease in his society.



Digitized by Google

"Beyond any man I ever conversed with, he had the power of quickening the mind, of stirring up thought, and setting one upon the track of interesting and useful inquiry and reflection. I never spent a half hour with him, but he sent me away laden with rich ingots of thought, enough to keep me thinking for weeks and months afterward. And I have often said that I owe no small part of what I am, and have been in the world, to impulses received from intercourse with Dr. Emmons and from early familiarity with his writings. His conversation abounded in principles, maxims, great thoughts, which one having heard, would be likely never to forget. In this way, I caught from him the theme of the first sermon I ever wrote — 'The heart governs the understanding." He dropped it as a casual remark; but it struck me as full of profound meaning and exceedingly practical in its bearing; and so I found it, when I set myself to analyze and apply it in my initiatory discourse.

"He had a quick way to dispose of a subject when he did not wish to pursue it. Not long after I entered college, I called upon him, and in the course of the conversation, something led me to ask him how he understood that passage in 2 Cor. 6: 14, which says, — 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.' Fixing his keen eye upon me, as if he saw mischief lurking in me or in the question; he said, — 'I have always found that young men have a way to get round that text, if they choose;' then, instead of giving his views of the passage, he rose and took down from his library a folio volume of Poole's Synopsis in Latin, and putting it into my hands, left me to study out the meaning, at my leisure, while he attended to some business of his own."

Another eminent divine who has been educated, in no small degree, by the Franklin recluse, is Rev. Gardiner Spring, D. D., of New York City. In a letter to Rev. Dr. Ide, he has thus declared his indebtedness to Emmons:

"I am under great obligation to him for giving a direction to my mind, in relation to the great object of the Christian ministry. He urged upon me to make the pulpit and the press my chief concern; and instead of those discursive habits of thought to which he perceived I was sufficiently exposed, to concentrate my efforts on this single object. While I do not adopt all the theological views of this wonderful man, I am more indebted to his writings and those of Bishop Butler, than to any other men. I know of no such refutations of Arminian, Socinian, and Universalist errors, as I find in the published works of Dr. Emmons. In all my controversies with these errors, I have repaired to him, if not to burnish my armor, to see that there were no loose joints in the

Digitized by Google

harness. In unfolding the nature of true godliness, in making every truth bear upon the conscience, in never relaxing the bonds of moral obligation, and in constraining the incorrigible to acknowledge that their excuses are refuges of lies, no man instructs me like Dr. Emmons. In my early ministry, I had considerable correspondence with older and wiser ministers than myself. I was not a little profited by their counsels; but no man so condescended to my ignorance and impatience as your venerable father."

We have already alluded[1] to the hook upon the study door of Emmons. That hook was a history. It spoke with an iron tongue to many a clergyman, and admonished him to make his life a studious one. That hook was a symbol of the resolute man's example, and that example was a stimulus to all who came near him. His very door exhibited the sign of his enthusiasm in study, and his enthusiasm enkindled the spirit of other men. An intimate clerical friend, lingering in the Doctor's room, long after the hour for work had come, said to the Doctor: "Perhaps, sir, I am detaining you from your books;" to which the enthusiastic student replied, with an inimitable *naïveté:* "I shall feel the happier when you have gone." The friend *went*, with a sharpened stimulus to his own books, and with a deeper reverence for the man whose love of toil broke through the barriers imposed by his love of good cheer. The industry of Emmons was like a water-wheel moving a thousand belts connected with it. He believed that a love to the ministerial office would animate the incumbents of that office, with a zeal for mental improvement. A great aim of his life was to inspire them with this zeal. Such remarks as the following are found scattered throughout his writings, and were distilled like honey from his lips in familiar conversation.

"All good ministers have a high relish for divine knowledge, and desire to dive into the deep things of God, and to enlarge their minds with clear and extensive views of his character, his designs, and works."

Studious and pious divines "move in a higher sphere than

[1] See p. 104, above.

Digitized by Google

mathematicians and astronomers, or natural and moral philosophers. These study the science of means; but divines soar to a higher region, and study the science of moral ends, which is the highest science in nature."

"The ministers of the gospel may be considered as the lowest order in the highest school in the universe. The knowledge of all other arts and sciences shall fail; but the divine science which they are pursuing, shall last forever; and their progress in it shall be like the rising sun, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

### § 2. *The Kindliness of his Severity in Criticism.*

Not a small part of his educating influence was exerted in his criticisms upon his brethren. He compressed volumes of meaning into brief sentences, each sentence intimating the idiosyncracies of his brother, the nature of the fault which was condemned, and of the excellence which was recommended. He has been blamed for the severity of his criticisms. It arose from the terse method in which he desired to express them, and by means of which they would be more distinctly remembered. It did not offend the men whom he aimed to correct. It was regarded as excellent oil. It was coupled with such an obvious interest in their improvement, that it rather incited them to gratitude for his endeavor to stimulate their lagging industry. He commended men who needed praise, and he was never severe upon men whom he regarded as so deficient in mental *stamina*, that they could not *afford* to be censured. The sensible clergymen whose faults he corrected were at last, if not at first, pleased with his severity upon them. They considered it a sign that he esteemed them as well worth an attempt to make *better*, and this implied that they already possessed somewhat of *good*. He did not look down upon them as such feebly burning lights, that a single application of the extinguishers would snuff them out. His style of criticism bore a striking resemblance to that of Andrew Fuller and Robert Hall. Who were sharper censors than they, or more benevolent friends? The men who received some of the most withering criticisms from Dr. Emmons, were

Digitized by Google

the very first to repeat them afterwards often with glee, still oftener with gratitude. They had full confidence, that he was educating them by his comments on their faults, and while he was reproving them with some sharpness in their presence, he would commend them for some virtue in their absence. Young clergymen often received from him such criticisms as would mortify them for a time, and still attach them to the critic, who would by all means *prompt* them, even if he *provoked* them, to good works.

When a young man had preached a whole system of theology in one discourse, the doctor asked him, on leaving the pulpit, "Do you ever mean to preach another sermon?" "Yes, sir." "What have you got to say? You've preached about every thing this morning."

When one of his former pupils had delivered an oratorical sermon, and had waited in vain for some commendation from his teacher, he ventured to expedite the compliment by saying, "I hope I have not wearied your people by the length of my discourse." "No, nor by its depth," was the reply.

A favorite clergyman undertook to apologize for the exuberance of metaphor in one of his discourses preached at Franklin, but he was interrupted by the assurance, "My people are like the blacksmith's dog, not afraid of sparks."

A preacher once complained to him, "I find my greatest difficulty in drawing the inferences in my sermons." "No doubt," was the doctor's reply, "for you have nothing to draw them from."

To a candidate for settlement he remarked, "You have struck twelve first. Fools will complain, if you do not strike thirteen next; wise men will complain, if you do."

He was impatient of a fault, not only in other men, but also in himself; he was less tolerant of his own foibles than of the foibles in his brethren; he was desirous of correcting all that was wrong, whether in his mind or manner, whether in the mind or manner of those around him; his enthusiasm for the reformation of his clerical friends prompted that caustic style of remark, which those who *knew* him knew how to interpret as an evidence of his kindness. On one occasion, while he was urging his ministerial brethren to a more rigid discipline of themselves,



Digitized by Google

and exposing the lamenesses of a sermon which one of them had read for criticism, the victim of the censure became indignant for a moment, and thrust out the abrupt query: "Mr. Emmons, what *would* you have been, if you had not been a *good* man?" "*Just like you*," was the quick reply; and none of the hearers was more amused with it than was the querist who had given the occasion for it, and who at once rejoined: "The Association is indebted to me for that good turn."

While the sharp words of a censor may sometimes irritate and injure a sensitive mind, still the spirit which prompted the words may be that of a man intent on a good service. The true captain does not pause to construct emollient phrases while he ought to be stirring up a timid battalion to the charge. We have heard the most benevolent fireman use harsh tones, when he was starting his comrades to one last effort for the protection of a family from the flames. Such was the kindly spirit of Emmons, even in those criticisms which appear sarcastic and scathing, when unaccompanied with his magnetic smile. He furnished a good illustration of the remark: "*Severitatem istam pari jucunditate condire, summaeque gravitati tantum comitatis adjungere, non minus difficile quam magnum est.*"

### § 3. *His Interest in Seminaries of Learning.*

We speak of Emmons as a recluse. Men think of him as a mere inquirer into the decrees of heaven. But he was a man of enterprise, and conversant with men of enterprise. Such men rode to his still parsonage in order to be electrified. He did not mingle in Conventions, but he dropped sententious phrases into the ear of those who did mingle in them. "I always go away from him with a new thought," has been the frequent word of his departing guest.[1] We can never trace all the influences of his critical and scientific mind, as it scintillated through all the circles which met around him. We can never learn how many educational enterprises were started under the direct or indirect stimulus of his remembered words and suggestive works. We can never count up all the hints which he let fall upon good ground, and they sprung up and bare fruit.

[1] See § 1 of the present chapter.

Digitized by Google

It is interesting, however, to notice, that some of the earliest projects for establishing Theological Schools in the United States originated from his intimate friends, — men who had felt the magnetic force of his fireside conversation. The following appendant narrative illustrates, partly, the indirect services which he rendered to some of our literary institutions, and, partly, the interest which he felt in the theological character of some of them.

*a.* His Interest in Andover Theological Seminary.

In 1778, thirty years before the Seminary at Andover was founded, a brother-in-law of Emmons wrote thus to Judge Niles,[1] another friend of Emmons:

Phillips Academy "has suggested a thought which I have often revolved in my mind. What if some enterprising pious genius should rise up, and set on foot a subscription for founding a Theological Academy?"[2]

Rev. Samuel Spring, D. D., another brother-in-law of Dr. Emmons, was one of the first men who proposed the establishment of a Seminary for training thorough, direct, plain, pungent, argumentative, doctrinal preachers, and for maintaining that definite and strict form of Calvinism which is commonly named Hopkinsian. That Emmons first suggested this plan we do not know. That his whole soul was enlisted in it, is certain. So implicit was the confidence reposed in him by the Hopkinsians, that many of them could not be satisfied unless their proposed Seminary were located in his own parish. At one time it was not only the desire, but the full expectation of Dr. Spring, to see the new Seminary in the still retreat of Franklin, where it would be the safest and the strongest, because under the sharp, quick eye of its ablest friend. When the project was named of uniting the Hopkinsian Seminary with the Institution proposed for the interests of Moderate Calvinism at Andover, Dr. Emmons rose up against it. He stood out against it, until he supposed that he had defeated it. "The Conference closed," — these are his words in relation to a meeting of the two parties, — "the Conference closed, and I rode home, fully satisfied that the Coalition was dead."[3] But by various

[1] Nathaniel Niles, of Fairlee, Vt., grandson of Rev. Samuel Niles, of Braintree, and brother of Samuel Niles, of Abington, who is named on pp. 120, 121, above, as one of Emmons's most intimate friends. Judge Niles opposed some of Emmons's theories, but took great delight in his society.

[2] Memorial of the Semi-Centennial Celebration at Andover, pp. 148–150.

[3] The writer of this Memoir has often heard Dr. Emmons narrate the proceedings of this remarkable Conference. It was one of the few Business Meetings which he attended at the sacrifice of his "study-hours."

Digitized by Google

processes, which it is needless to specify here and now, the Coalition revived. Dr. Emmons, however, remained firm in the conviction, that it would be better for the Hopkinsians to found a Seminary for themselves. He had a high esteem for many of the gentlemen interested in the rival Seminary at Andover, but he did not regard them as sufficiently outspoken and bold in their method of treating the doctrines of decrees, election, divine sovereignty, the union of human activity and dependence, the utter and entire sinfulness of all voluntary acts preceding the new birth. He looked upon the Constitution which those gentlemen had adopted for the basis of their new Seminary, as too vague and indefinite; and he insisted that there must be a Creed more exact and unequivocal, more in sympathy with the views of the elder and the younger Edwards, Hopkins of Newport, and Hopkins of Salem, Bellamy, Smalley, West, Catlin, and Spring. He refused to meet again with the two parties in the Coalition, but his advice was freely given to the Hopkinsian party, who regretted his personal absence from them. They framed their definite Creed, under his fatherly counsel. Before this carefully written Creed was adopted, every word of it was placed, again and again, before his keen eye. Dr. Spring, of Newburyport, visited the Franklin parsonage repeatedly, for the purpose of obtaining the advice of Emmons, not only with regard to the substance and the form of this Creed, but also with regard to the initiatory processes of the Seminary. It was thought to be of incalculable importance, that the Seminary begin right. There was reason to believe, that as it began, so it would continue. Therefore, the early history of the Institution received many an imprint from the Franklin divine.[1]

Nor in later years did the friends of the Seminary which had sprung from the "Coalition," forget to ask wisdom from the sage who had opposed the compromise. It has happened to me, recently, to peruse two epistles which illustrate the regard paid to this modest divine by the first Professors of the Seminary. One of the letters is from Rev. Dr. Porter, who was wont to say: "I find much that is true and strong in the the-

[1] The order of theological topics which Dr. Emmons had adopted for his School was almost precisely the same which was adopted at Andover at the *commencement* of the Seminary, and which, with very few changes, was continued during the professorship of Dr. Woods. Compare Emmons's Letter in Chapter XIII. § 2, below, with Woods's Works, Vol. IV. pp. 549–591, and contrast the arrangement of his System with the order of the Assembly's Catechism.

The second volume of Dr. Emmons's Sermons was published through the instrumentality of the students at Andover. Samuel J. Mills and Adoniram Judson took eight copies, each. Many subscribers were procured through their agency. — Among the few subscribers in Boston were the Rev. J. S. Buckminster and Rev. William E. Channing.

Digitized by Google

ology of Dr. Emmons, and I find nothing in it essentially diverse from the teachings of all our best theologians." The letter is as follows:

"ANDOVER, Dec. 3, 1827.

"REV. AND RESPECTED SIR:— Since I have been in this place, it has constantly been my intention to visit you at your own house. But as I have commonly travelled in the stage, I have hitherto been disappointed in fulfilling this intention, nor can I say when I may be able to do it. I send the accompanying sermon, in consequence of a suggestion that you had expressed a wish to see it, and because I am glad of any opportunity to show you even so small a token of respect. The truth is, if you will allow me to say it, that I have long regarded you as a father in our Zion, and should, at any time, have felt it a high privilege to consult you respecting my own duties, and the interests of our sacred Seminary. After this frank declaration, allow me to add, that any strictures which you may find time to give me by letter, respecting this sermon, or the course of our measures here, will be gratefully received.

"With sincere respect, yours, etc.,

"E. PORTER."

The other epistle is from Rev. Dr. Woods, who more than once remarked: "Dr. Emmons has one of the grandest understandings, ever created in this world." The letter is as follows:

"ANDOVER, Aug. 9, 1830.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR:— I send you herewith a copy of my Letters to Dr. Taylor. I have, for some time, been desirous of knowing what you think of his peculiar speculations. And considering how much you have thought upon such subjects, I should be much gratified, if you would write me your views with freedom. It has been my intention to visit you, and spend a few days with you some vacation; and I hope still to enjoy that pleasure. If after reading my Letters to Dr. Taylor, you are led to apprehend that there is any thing wrong in my habit of thinking and reasoning, I shall take it as a favor, if you will tell me.

"I am, dear sir, with great respect and affection, yours,

"L. WOODS."

It is a singular fact that Dr. Eliphalet Pearson, who was the Coryphaeus of the Moderate Calvinists in founding the new Seminary at Andover, and who was as earnest in advocating, as Dr. Emmons was earnest in opposing, the union between the Calvinistical and the Hopkinsian schools, became, in his later years, a convert to the opinion of his antagonist, and regretted that he had not allowed Dr. Emmons to have his own way. As the Franklin divine did not approve of the incipient processes, so the Andover divine did not approve of the ultimate results, of the Coalition between the two Schools. The Seminary was more distinctively Hopkinsian, than Dr. Pearson wished or expected it to be. He did not hesitate to allow, in his open-hearted way, that he was disappointed and dissatisfied with the management of the Seminary, and that he would never have favored the "compromise," if he had suspected



Digitized by Google

that it would have enured so decidedly to the advantage of the Hopkinsians.[1]

It has been supposed that the stern Hopkinsian, as he disapproved of the compromise on which the Seminary was founded, remained hostile to the School. We have already seen, however, that although upright and erect in stating his objections to a plan, he was equally remarkable for acquiescing in that plan when it was fully established, and when it promised, on the whole, to result in more good than evil. To a youthful friend, who had been advised not to enter the new Seminary, but to pursue his studies with Dr. Emmons, he remarked — and he more than once repeated similar words to young men: "Go to Andover; — I do not like the Coalition — but go there. I think that right doctrine will be taught there for the present. If my son Williams were to be a minister, I would send him there, as Andover now is. But I do not know how long it will stay good."

*b.* His Interest in Bangor and Auburn Theological Seminaries, and in Yale, Williams, Dartmouth and Amherst Colleges.

As the Seminary at Andover was started by men who had felt the magnetizing influence of Emmons, so was the Seminary at Bangor. He was not a diplomatist. He did not arrange the details of a scheme for managing the pecuniary or the disciplinary interests of a theological school; but no one can read the ensuing Sketches[2] of Bailey, Wines, Fowler, Smith, and Pond, without the impression that these pupils of Emmons were inspirited by him to a great work, and that the Institution to which they so nobly consecrated their strength, owes a debt of lasting thanks to their stimulating teacher.

It is another curious fact, that a clergyman, who for more than fifteen years was one of Dr. Emmons's most intimate friends and neighbors, and whose literary spirit was often enkindled in the Franklin study, is said to have been "greatly instrumental in the establishment of Hamilton College, and [in 1818 of] Auburn Theological Seminary." This friend was Rev. Caleb Alexander,[3] of Mendon, Mass. He was the first President of the Board of Commissioners of the Auburn Seminary, and at the inauguration of its first Professors, was selected to give the history

[1] The preceding statement is borrowed from an Address prepared by the author of this Memoir for the Semi-Centennial Celebration of the Founding of the Theological Seminary at Andover. See Rev. John L. Taylor's Memorial, etc., pp. 227–236.

[2] See Chapter XIII. § 3.

[3] See History of Mendon Association, pp. 128–130.

Digitized by Google

of its rise, progress and needs. In an obituary notice of this preacher and author, the Onondaga Register for April 16, 1828, says: "Being himself an excellent scholar, he excelled in this department of usefulness, and may be considered as the founder of several important literary Institutions."[1]

Dr. Emmons had great confidence in Rev. Matthew La Rue Perrine, D. D., who from 1821 until 1836, was Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Polity in the Institution at Auburn, and for two years gave instruction in the theological as well as in the historical department. Rev. Dr. A. E. Campbell says (Sprague's Annals, IV. 239) of Dr. Perrine: "In his theological speculations, I suppose he harmonized very nearly with Dr. Emmons; and though his peculiar views doubtless gave a tinge to his preaching, yet I do not think that he was accustomed to bring them forward very distinctly, especially in a controversial manner. There is no doubt, that a considerable number of the earlier students of the Seminary had their theological views moulded by his influence in conformity with Dr. Emmons's system." Stimulated by such facts, Emmons contributed of his scanty income, at various times, and he also induced many of his friends to contribute to the pecuniary relief of the Auburn as also of the Bangor Seminary.

[1] Another conspicuous agent in establishing the Divinity School at Auburn was Rev. Dirck C. Lansing, D. D., an admirer and an earnest reader of the Franklin divine. Dr. N. S. S. Beman says of him: "He was, *out and out*, a Hopkinsian." He was elected Professor of Sacred Rhetoric in the Seminary, in 1821. When he retired from office in 1826, the Board of Commissioners resolved, "that this Board, in behalf of this Christian community, and in their own behalf, do, in the exercise of Christian affection and respectful gratitude, record the name of D. C. Lansing, among the Founders of this Seminary, and as one of the prime and most efficient agents in measures which have led to its establishment and its present pleasing and flourishing condition." See Hotchkin's History of Western New York. In his Semi-Centennial Discourse, preached in Brooklyn, N. Y., January 1856, Dr. Lansing thus enumerates the general results of his ministry: "To sum up all, to the glory of the blessed and adorable God, I would say, that I have been instrumental in establishing various institutions of learning for the instruction of both sexes; was one of the original Trustees of Hamilton College; was the principal building committee and financial agent of Auburn Theological Seminary; and for four years gave occasional instruction in the department of Sacred Rhetoric. I have been instrumental in erecting, enlarging, or modifying eleven houses of worship. For all this I adore and magnify the great and blessed God. But more than for all this, and unutterably beyond and above it all — I do adore Him for having condescended to employ me, so unworthy as I am, in being principally instrumental in promoting at least sixty revivals of religion, in upwards of forty different places." — *Discourse Commemorative of the late Dirck C. Lansing, D. D. By Rev. Joseph P. Thompson, Pastor of the Broadway Tabernacle Church, New York.* Dr. Thompson ascribes to Dr. Lansing the honor of *projecting* "the Auburn Theological Seminary, for which, mainly by his personal agency, he secured an endowment of $100,000 in money and lands." — (pp. 42, 43.)

Digitized by Google

In many of our colleges also, Dr. Emmons felt a living interest. All his theological predilections led him to cherish a peculiar reverence for his *Alma Mater*. Notwithstanding his independence of character, he regarded himself as *formed* by Yale College, and the influences clustering around it; as formed by the *Institution*, rather than by any one of its officers; by the atmosphere which he breathed at the side of Governor Treadwell and Judge Trumbull and Dr. Strong. If with his early Arminian proclivities, he had not been trained in this ancient school, and afterward in the house of its eminent alumnus, John Smalley, it seems that his entire life-work would have been different from what it has been. He regarded his *Alma Mater* as the mother of the soundest theological literature in the world, and he has, in some degree, repaid the debt of gratitude he owed her by reflecting the light of his own name upon her already luminous record.

The son of one of his parishioners has thus described those theological influences of the College, which gave to Emmons a personal interest in it:

"The fathers of New England theology — Edwards, Bellamy, Hopkins, West, Smalley, Emmons, and Dwight, — went forth from Yale. The first and most eminent of these, after taking his degree, remained here for several years as resident graduate, and afterwards as tutor. Here, in his own judgment, his religious life began; here his principles were formed, and he received the discipline which prepared him to take the highest rank in the field of intellectual science. Bellamy, who was converted soon after leaving college, and Hopkins, were pupils of Edwards. From Hopkins, West derived his theology; Smalley studied with Bellamy, and Emmons with Smalley. These men, and especially the foremost one among them, who gave the impulse to all the rest, have strongly influenced the thinking of the age. Whatever is distinctive in American theology as contrasted with the general theology of the church may be traced to them."[1]

"How could the Franklin recluse have satisfied himself in spinning out and out his metaphysical theories, while he was aware that few men understood him?" This is a question often asked by impatient critics. But he expected to be understood. He looked with hopeful interest to the clergymen connected with our colleges. Williams College, for example, was intimately associated with the cause of Hopkinsianism, as well as the cause of Missions, the one cause being a precursor of the other. That Institution was planted amid the churches that were gathered under the personal labors and influence of Dr. Hopkins, while in Great Barrington. The first Vice-President of the College was Emmons's intimate companion, Dr. Stephen West of Stockbridge; the

[1] Prof. George P. Fisher's Discourse, commemorative of the Church of Christ in Yale College during the first century of its existence; (pp. 36, 37).

Digitized by Google

second Vice-President was another staunch Hopkinsian, Dr. Alvan Hyde of Lee. The third Vice-President was Dr. Samuel Shepard of Lenox, another disciple of Hopkins and friend of Emmons. Collins and Little, who were early trustees of the Institution, studied theology with Dr. Bellamy. Dr. Fitch the first President of the College was regarded by Dr. Hopkins as an advocate of the New Divinity.[1] All the clerical trustees of the Institution were so decided in their attachment to the New Divinity, that they were tenacious in advocating the use of Dr. Hopkins's System as a college classic. The following extract from a letter of Dr. West to Dr. Hopkins, is a remarkable document:

"STOCKBRIDGE, September 19, 1797.

"You spoke in your last of our having prohibited your system being recited in Williams College. It is true, the Trustees have prohibited it. It was introduced as a classical study without the order of the Corporation. The President introduced it because, as he told me, he thought it much exceeded any thing of the kind he had seen. But the civilian part of our Board, it seems, were of another opinion. They judged, that its being recited would be injurious to the reputation of our new Institution. The matter was considerably discussed. The clerical part of the Board were all of one mind; and were greatly opposed to its being rejected. But when the vote for its rejection was taken every hand was up, excepting those of the ministers. Though the *world seems to be made for Cæsar*, yet we know that Zion's God reigns. The time is not yet come for truth to prevail. But in God's good time, it surely will come. The Evil One intends to hold the Colleges, but the Lord will support his own cause."

Such facts as these aroused Emmons and other Hopkinsian divines to a peculiar interest in Williams College. Whether it be wise or unwise to be governed by theological predilections in an estimate of Collegiate schools, Emmons early looked at these schools in their religious aspect. Long before the orthodox clergymen of Massachusetts began to discountenance the practice of sending orthodox young men to Harvard College, the Franklin pastor had discountenanced it in the most decisive way.[2] Here as elsewhere, he anticipated the opinion of his sect. Dartmouth College, on the other hand, he trusted and loved as a nursery of sound doctrine. Many of his pupils were among its alumni.[3] He smiled upon Amherst College, also, in its gloomiest days. One of his

[1] See Memoir of Hopkins, p. 237.

[2] Of the twenty-five young men, parishioners of Dr. Emmons who were liberally educated during his residence in Franklin, eighteen were graduated at Brown University. For many years, three of his pupils occupied Presidential or Professorial chairs in three Baptist Universities.

[3] See pp. 123, 124, above.

Digitized by Google

pupils was largely instrumental in procuring the original endowment for it.[1] He subscribed for that endowment five times as much as his friends deemed it prudent for him to give.

It has been often asked, Where is the carefully selected library of more than six hundred volumes, which once belonged to the Franklin student? He distributed the most valuable portions of it among the literary men, and the literary institutions of the land.[2] He was always ready to aid indigent scholars from his own limited income. He gave away his manuscript sermons, his books, and his ideas. — But his more important contribution to the work of training the public mind, will be seen in the following chapter.

[1] See Chapter XIII. § 3.

[2] The following is a specimen of the letters, betraying the manner in which his respectable library was scattered through the country forty years ago:

"FRANKLIN, July 20, 1820.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR, — I rejoice to hear that the Synod of Tennessee have established a Theological Seminary, which promises fair to be extensively useful. I hope they will happily succeed in their pious and benevolent design. And agreeably to your request, I send you five volumes, as a very small addition to that little library which you are collecting for that infant institution.

"With my best wishes for your personal felicity and public usefulness, dear sir, I am affectionately yours,

NATHANAEL EMMONS.

"Rev. Dr. Richards, Newark, N. J."

Digitized by Google

# CHAPTER XIII.

## HIS THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL.

### § 1. *Number of his Pupils.*

In his old age Dr. Emmons recalled the names of eighty-six or seven young men, who had pursued their theological studies with him. He might have recalled a hundred names, if his memory had retained its former power. He began to take theological pupils eighty-three years ago, and he continued to take them for more than forty years. He preserved no written catalogue, and in his final enumeration of them, he omitted several prominent men. No private instructor in the land has ever trained so large a number of ministers as were trained at Franklin. Even the celebrated Dr. Charles Backus did not instruct more than fifty students; Dr. Asahel Hooker, not more than thirty-three; Dr. Asa Burton, not more than sixty. The students of Emmons, as of other teachers in that day, continued their preparatory course from three to twenty-four months. A few of his pupils pursued their studies, in part, with other instructors.

It is true, that Professors in theological seminaries have *participated* in educating a larger number of theological pupils, than were trained by Emmons; but their scholars have been fashioned, not so much by any *one* of these Professors, as by a collective band of them, by large associations of fellow-students in social debate, by rich libraries and various public appeals. The pupils of Emmons, however, were disciplined by himself. Many of them lived in his family. He was intimate with each one of them. He was not compelled to give *general* instructions, which might surpass the comprehension of one, but would appear insipid to another. He knew how to apply his precise



Digitized by Google

words to the individual sitting by his side. He did apply them with an electric power. It has been often said, that he has effected more, without adventitious helps, in fashioning the entire character of his pupils in divinity, than has been effected by any other theological instructor in our land. It is, indeed, a disadvantage to subject young men so exclusively to the sway of an individual teacher. The public course of theological education is more expansive, and more healthful than is the private. It is not, however, so conducive to the immediate, individual, and personal influence of any single teacher or any single mind. What it gains in expansiveness, it loses in concentration.

### § 2. *His Method of giving Instruction.*

In his simple-hearted way, Dr. Emmons has thus described his manner of conducting his school:

"I was naturally fond of retirement; and when I entered into a family state, I intended to live as much by myself, as would be consistent with proper attention to my people, and to occasional visitants. It did not once occur to my mind, that I should become an instructor in divinity. The first young gentleman that applied for instruction [this was in or before the year 1778] proposed to tarry but a few weeks, and accordingly left me as soon as he proposed. I had then no expectation of any future application. But pretty soon after this, another young man in the vicinity wished to live with me a little while [this was in the year 1779]; and, being in a bereaved situation, I consented to receive him into my family, and assist him in his theological studies a few months. Still, I had not the remotest thought of becoming an instructor of candidates for the ministry; but it so happened, that numbers successively put themselves under my instruction, and in the term of about fifty years, I have taught between eighty and ninety pupils." — *Memoir of himself.*

The doctor omits to say, that he often resolved to decline all applications of theological students, and that he often did positively refuse their requests for his aid in instructing them. He was surprised, that any one should desire his assistance. He said in his old age to one of his former scholars: "I verily

Digitized by Google

thought, when you asked me to take you as a pupil, that you were bereft of your wit. I pitied you, from the bottom of my heart." He writes;

"At first, I left my students to take very much their own method of studying, only directing them to read particular authors, conversing with them occasionally, and hearing them read their compositions. But after I durst consider myself as an instructor, I adopted nearly the same mode of instructing that Mr. Smalley had taught me. I drew up a concise system of theological questions, which I put into the hands of my pupils, and directed them to write a longer or shorter dissertation upon each question; in the order it was placed. But previously to their writing upon any subject, I directed them to read some of the best authors I had, who had written upon each side of the question. This appeared to be necessary, not only to give them a full and extensive view of every subject, but also to guard them against falling into errors afterwards. For while they were reading on the wrong side of any question, I had opportunity to make such remarks upon what they read, or what occurred to them in reading, as might prevent their being led astray by false or sophistical reasoning. Though I supposed it was necessary, yet I knew it was dangerous, to read authors of erroneous sentiments; because the best heads and the best hearts are not always able to detect and refute sophistry, without some assistance. In this view, it appeared proper to put authors on both sides of a question into the hands of my pupils, and to give them a general knowledge of the most false and dangerous schemes of religion, before they left me. I thought the danger was less in this way, than to allow them to go out into the world, without being, in some measure, prepared to meet and refute those who either professed or propagated false and destructive sentiments.

"In hearing their discourses, I used to remark upon their manner of arranging their thoughts, upon the sentiments they exhibited, and upon the beauties and defects of their language. I cautioned them against a flowery, bombastic style, on the one hand; and on the other, against a too low, vulgar, slovenly manner of expression. I recommended a plain, neat, perspicuous, energetic mode of writing and speaking, which all could under-



Digitized by Google

stand, which none could dislike, and which some of the best judges would admire. I commonly spent some time every day with my students, either to hear their compositions, or to converse with them upon particular subjects. I often discoursed upon the duties, difficulties, advantages, and trials of ministers. I inculcated the importance of being prudent, faithful, and exemplary, in every part of their ministerial duty. I urged them to give themselves wholly to their work, and never encumber themselves with the concerns of the world, or dissipate their minds by mixing with vain and unprofitable company. I endeavored to point out how they should treat their parishioners of various characters and dispositions, and taught them as well as I could, how to become able and faithful ministers." — *Memoir of himself.*

The following extract of an epistle from Dr. Emmons to Rev. Asahel Hooker, the celebrated teacher in Goshen, Conn., illustrates the course of study pursued in the Franklin School:

FRANKLIN, July 16, 1804.

REVEREND SIR, — I am glad that you have consented to instruct young men for the ministry. I wish you success in your undertaking, and am willing to give you my sentiments upon what appears to me a proper mode of conducting a Theological School. I think students should read and write systematically upon the principal subjects in divinity. They had better read and write upon a few important and fundamental subjects, than to read and write upon a large number of distinct and unconnected questions. For when they read and write upon a subject, the questions belonging to that subject will naturally occur, and can be discussed with more advantage in that, than in any other connection. The questions I commonly propose, and the authors I recommend, are the following, viz:

1. *On the Being and Perfections of God.* Hume's Dialogues, Clarke, Doddridge.
2. *On the Inspiration of the Scriptures.* Deism Refuted, Doddridge, Paley.
3. *On the Trinity.* Chubb, Priestly, Lyndsey, Clarke, Gill, Doddridge, Waterland.
4. *On the Decrees of God.* Edwards, Dickinson, Nelson, Whitby.
5. *On Moral Agency.* Edwards and Son, West of Stockbridge, Priestly, Dana.
6. *On the Nature of Holiness.* Edwards, Hopkins.
7. *On the state of man before the Fall.* Edwards, Chauncy, Whitby, Taylor.
8. *On the state of Man after the Fall.* The same.
9. *On the effects of Adam's Fall on his posterity.* The same.

Digitized by Google

10. *On the Atonement.* Bellamy, Hopkins, West, Smalley, Edwards.
11. *On the terms of Salvation.* Gill, Dickinson, Sandeman.
12. *On Regeneration.* Hopkins.
13. *On Repentance.* Bellamy's Dialogues, Niles.
14. *On Faith.* Bellamy's Dialogues, Dickinson.
15. *On Justification.* Edwards, Dickinson, Gill, Bellamy.
16. *On Saints' Perseverance.* Bellamy, Dickinson, Whitby.
17. *On Death.* Bishop Law, Price and Priestly, Chauncy, Ditton.
18. *On the Resurrection of the Dead.* Doddridge, Locke, Gill.
19. *On the General Judgment.* Chauncy, Edwards, Strong, Kelly.
20. *On Baptism.* Gill, Lathrop, West, Peter Edwards.
21. *On the means of Grace.* Hopkins, Hemmenway, Spring, Tappan.
22. *On the terms of Communion.* Edwards, Stoddard, Cambridge Platform.
23. *On the Form of the Christian Church.* Hooker, Cambridge Platform.
24. *On Church Discipline.* Hooker, Cambridge Platform, Hopkins.
25. *On Presbyterian Ordination.* Hooker, Hobart, Chauncy, Cambridge Platform.
26. *On the Millennium.* Bellamy, Hopkins, Newton, Lowman.[1]

In running over this catalogue, you will perceive, that I recommend heterodox as well as orthodox writers on each question. Young men will, sooner or later, meet with heterodox books, and they had better read them under the eye and assistance of an instructor, than after they are left to their own discretion only. I commonly spend an hour or two

[1] The course of study prescribed by Dr. Emmons appears quite limited, when we compare it with the course pursued at our Theological Seminaries. But it appears quite respectable when we compare it with the course prescribed by other clergymen of his time. The following is the syllabus of the Theological course adopted by Rev. David Tappan, D. D., Hollis Professor at Harvard College, and the chief teacher of the Calvinists, as distinct from the Hopkinsians in Massachusetts, during the latter part of the last century:

On Natural Religion. — Abernethy's and Leland's Sermons on the Divine Attributes; Clarke's Demonstration, etc.; Price on Morals.

On the Necessity of Revelation. — Leland or Campbell.

On the Proof of Revelation. — Doddridge's three Sermons on this subject; Newton on the Prophecies; West on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ; Littleton on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul; Farmer on Miracles; Paley's Evidences; Butler's Analogy.

On the Doctrines of Revelation. — The Expositions of Doddridge, Guise, Henry, and Whitby; Ridgley's Body of Divinity; Edwards's History of Redemption, and Treatise on the Affections; Berry Street Sermons; the Sermons of Blair, Doddridge, Grove, Lathrop, S. Stennett, Sherlock, Tillotson, R. Walker, Watts, Evans.

On the Christian Church and Ordinances. — Hemmenway and Emmons; Edwards, Lathrop, and Tawgood on Infant Baptism; Bell, Grove, and Henry on the Lord's Supper.

On Jewish and Ecclesiastical History. — Lowman and Shaw on Judaism; Shuckford's and Prideaux's Connexions; Jortin's and Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History.

Digitized by Google

every afternoon or evening, in hearing the students read their compositions, in making remarks upon them, and in answering questions proposed. I seldom propose questions myself, because the students can best state their own questions and difficulties; and when they really find difficulties, they will better attend to and understand what is said to remove them. I occasionally give them particular advice and instruction upon sermonizing, public speaking, parochial duties, private conversation, and the general course of their studies in future life. This is a very general mode of instruction, in which you may possibly find some things to be approved.

One of his theological pupils, Rev. Dr. Pond, of Bangor, has thus described the exercises at the Franklin School:

"Our teacher was not accustomed to favor us with his own private opinion, before we had written on the doctrines which we examined. He preferred that we should exercise our own thoughts upon them, and investigate them independently. But when the time for reading came, he was very free in his criticisms and remarks. The discussions which took place in connection with the reading of Essays, were always interesting, and sometimes considerably protracted.

"The course of instruction was admirably fitted to put a young man upon his own resources, and if he had any thing in him, to draw it out. The planning and preparing of Essays, which were to pass the ordeal of Dr. Emmons's criticism, was a formidable affair, which no one would be willing to pass lightly over; and then, this reading, thinking, writing, and discussing upon a long train of connected subjects, — subjects involving questions of great difficulty and importance, — was adapted, beyond almost any thing, to stir and to quicken the soul. Under such a process, the mind became not only stored and furnished, but trained and disciplined, and prepared in the best manner, for future effort and usefulness.[1]

"Dr. Emmons had a peculiar faculty of attaching his students to himself personally.[2] They not only revered and honored him, but they

[1] "All the formal and incidental remarks of Dr. Emmons, all his hints and suggestions were wonderfully fitted to make his pupils think, *compel* them to think for themselves, to think *right*, and to express their thoughts in appropriate language." — *MS. Letter of Rev. David Brigham.*

[2] The language of one of these pupils is, "In the instruction of students in theology, of whom he had a large number, he excelled every teacher of whom I have ever had any knowledge, in any department of education, whether literary, scientific, or professional." — *Rev. Thomas Williams's Discourse on the Official Character of Dr. Emmons.*

The following extract of a letter written to Dr. Emmons by his pupil, Rev. Joseph

Digitized by Google

loved him. He had also the faculty of imbuing them with his own peculiar sentiments, and of working out of them every thing of an opposite tendency. Of all young men whom he instructed in theology, very few left him without becoming pretty thorough Hopkinsians. And all this was accomplished without any artifice, or any force put upon their opinions, except the force of his invincible logic.

"And not only did the pupils of Dr. Emmons imbibe his opinions, the most of them were led to *imitate* him, so far as they were able, in his style and manner. They tried to make sermons after his model; and it was chiefly through an influence of this sort, that his peculiar, topical mode of constructing sermons prevailed so extensively in New England for more than half a century.

"Among the hundreds of ministers, who regarded Dr. Emmons as a sort of model preacher, some were *servile* imitators of him. They strove to think and speak precisely like him, — an attempt in which not a few of them miserably failed. They had the bones of his theology, but they were bare bones. The skeletons of their sermons bore some resemblance to his, but his were covered with sinews and flesh, and were full of the breath and the warmth of life; while theirs were mere skeletons, cold and dry. Others, while they admired Dr. Emmons, and would have called him Rabbi, rather than any other uninspired man, still took the liberty, which *he* always took, and always encouraged, of thinking and speaking in their own natural way. If they differed from him somewhat in their modes of sermonizing, or in stating and defending some of the doctrines of the gospel; this was no more than he had done, in regard to Edwards, Hopkins, and Smalley, and others whom he most venerated as ministers of Christ."

### § 3. *The Interest of his Pupils in the Cause of Education.*

The twelfth Chapter of this Memoir describes the subject of it as an educator of the public mind. The stimulus which he gave to his pupils, quickened many of them to an interest in educational processes. This class of his students reflect his own

Emerson (see Emerson's Memoir, pp. 323, 324), illustrates the enthusiastic and lifelong attachment of the Franklin students to their teacher: — "Wethersfield, Ct., Aug. 2, 1828. Most Honored Friend and Father, — Scarcely any house or study is so familiar or so dear to my heart, as yours. They are intimately associated with my most valued improvements — with my happiest hours. I fear I shall no more enjoy with you, 'the feast of reason and the flow of soul,' except in memory, which still loves to linger there. But though I cannot visit you, I must still look to you for advice and counsel, with the same filial confidence as thirty years ago."



Digitized by Google

image. His life will not be seen in all its aspects, unless we look at it as daguerreotyped upon his pupils in the schools. The ensuing sketches are, therefore, appended to the record of his educational labors.

### Professor Abijah Wines.

This indefatigable worker was born in Southold, Long Island, May 27, 1766, was married at the age of twenty to Ruth, daughter of Hon. Benjamin Giles, of Newport, N. H., where Mr. Wines had resided five years. When he had become the father of two children, and was fully established as a farmer at Newport, he became a real servant of God, and at once desired to become a public servant in the sacred office. "But [writes the Secretary of the New Hampshire Missionary Society], what shall he do with his wife and two children, and how shall he take care of his farm? His wife, a lady of great energy and remarkable executive powers, relieved him on these points; for she assured him that she could manage the farm, support herself and children, and aid him besides in obtaining means for his education. This she actually did, and when her husband was graduated at Dartmouth College in 1794, and was the father of four children, his estate was of more value than at the time he committed its management to his wife."

"On leaving College," [says Dr. Sprague, Annals, Vol. II. p. 473], Mr. Wines "went to Franklin, Mass., to prosecute his theological studies under the direction of Dr. Emmons. The teacher and the pupil are said to have been mutually pleased, and each to have found in the other a kindred spirit. Having remained here not far from a year, he was licensed to preach about August, 1795, and, on returning to his house at Newport, was employed by the church and society there to preach as a candidate for settlement. In the course of a few months he was invited to become their pastor; and, having accepted the call, was ordained January, 1796. The ordination sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Burton, of Thetford, Vt."

It is a remarkable fact, that the church in Newport had waited nearly five years without a pastor, for the purpose of enjoying the services of this "prophet in his own country." He remained the bishop of this people from Jan. 5, 1796, until November, 1816, having been favored with two extensive revivals of religion, one of them adding about seventy converts to his church. His parishioners loved him as "a father, a brother, and a friend." They were thoroughly indoctrinated, and were made familiar with a lovely ideal of the religious life. From 1796, the year of his ordination, until 1855, eight hundred and ninety-seven persons were admitted to his church. So have his works followed him.

"After laboring," says the Secretary of the New Hampshire Missionary Society, "more than twenty years at Newport, Mr. Wines conceived the design of establishing a Theological Seminary in Ohio, then one of the remotest Western States. Having a presentiment of what that State, and other parts of the great Valley of the Mississippi would become, he foresaw the importance of early establishing there a 'school of the prophets.' Thinking that he might be instrumental in laying the foundation for an Institution of the kind, he asked a dismission from his pastoral charge, that he might make the attempt. With great reluctance his people granted his request. In what way Mr. Wines expected to accomplish so great an undertaking, was not very

Digitized by Google

apparent. But he addressed himself earnestly to the work of exploring the southern part of Ohio, going all the way from Newport on horseback, in company with one of his theological pupils, Rev. Dyer Burge. The last-named minister, now living in Ohio at an advanced age, whom I often saw there from 1836 to 1840, frequently related to me the enthusiasm with which Mr. Wines entered upon his cherished enterprise. But he had not been long in Ohio, then mostly a wilderness, before he saw that his undertaking was impracticable. No coadjutors could he enlist there. No funds could he secure, and to his great disappointment, he was obliged to abandon his project. The disappointment, together with the reaction of tearing himself away from his attached church and people, and thus throwing himself out of an important position of usefulness, had the effect to dethrone his reason. He shortly returned to his family in Newport, an insane man."

Mr. Wines, having already distinguished himself as an instructor of candidates in theology, was invited, before his Western tour, to fill the theological professorship in the Maine Charity School, an institution first projected at that time, and existing yet as the Bangor Theological Seminary. After his Western tour, and the recovery of his health, Mr. Wines was again importuned to occupy this new professorship. He accepted the office, and in the spring of 1818, commenced its duties. The celebrated Jehudi Ashmun was his colleague Professor.

Mr. Wines resigned his office in 1819, "and [writes the Secretary of the New Hampshire Missionary Society], removed to Deer Island in Penobscot Bay, where he supplied the Congregational church of the Island twelve years, earnestly devoted to his work, and taking a deep interest in the cause of temperance, then just attracting public attention. The morbid nervous affection which had prostrated his mind in 1817, returned; and, leaving Deer Island, he went with a son into the wilderness of Maine, erected a saw-mill, and engaged in active business. But, his melancholy increasing, he was removed, August 1832, to the McLean Asylum in Charlestown, where he died, February 11, 1833, in his sixty-seventh year. Had Mr. Wines yielded to the entreaties of his church and people at Newport to remain their pastor, he probably would have escaped the terrible disease which visited him, and might have continued useful and happy in his parochial relations."

"In stature, he was large, erect, but of a commanding aspect, and looking as if he had been born to be a leader. His features were strongly marked, — his nose prominent, his eye large, and his forehead uncommonly well developed — indeed his personal appearance altogether was highly impressive, and there was an air of nobility about all his movements."

"As a preacher, Mr. Wines possessed many admirable qualities. His voice was strong and commanding, but not particularly melodious. His fine person and natural and easy manner were greatly in his favor. His perceptions were clear and quick, and he saw the remote relations of things, almost as by intuition. He reasoned with great directness and force; marching forward to his conclusion by a path so luminous, that his hearers generally felt constrained to follow him. His Calvinism was of the Hopkinsian type, and his preaching was in a high degree doctrinal. He preached with a boldness and fervor, that left no one in doubt as to the sincerity and strength of his convictions."

"But his highest excellence was his devoted piety. He seemed always ready to do

Digitized by Google

the will of his heavenly Father, and always to live as if he were longing to breathe the atmosphere of heaven. It was manifest to all who witnessed his daily walk, that the commanding purpose of his life was to glorify God in the faithful discharge of all his duties. He was preëminently an honest man, and a consistent, every day Christian." — Sprague's Annals. II. 375, 376.

Mr. Wines published five sermons, also a Treatise on the "Nature of the Sinner's Inability to become holy." Four of his daughters were married to ministers of the gospel.

### Professor Bancroft Fowler.

This undervalued man was born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in 1776, was graduated at Yale College in 1796, was tutor in the college from 1800 until 1804; was settled in Windsor, Vermont, from about 1812 until 1819, was then elected successor to Jehudi Ashmun in the Professorship of Sacred Literature in Bangor Theological Seminary. Remaining in this office until 1825, he was settled at Northfield, Massachusetts, in 1831, and at Bernardston, Massachusetts, in 1836. On the 20th of November, 1839, he was installed in Greenfield, New Hampshire, and dismissed April 2, 1845. He died at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, April 5, 1856, aged eighty years.

"I knew him personally," says the Secretary of the New Hampshire Missionary Society. "He had a mind decidedly superior and a fine classical taste. He excelled in the *belles lettres*. He was a good writer of sermons, and a devout Christian. But his manners in the pulpit were not easy, and therefore as a preacher he was not popular. He did not pass with the public for what he was worth. The impression which he made as a speaker was unequal to his talents, his education, and his soundness and ability as a theologian." He mourned over this limitation of his usefulness. Still he was venerated as a Christian gentleman, and his character did more good than his words.

### Professor John Smith.

This sterling divine was born in Belchertown, Massachusetts, March 5, 1766; was graduated at Dartmouth College in 1794; was settled nineteen years, from January 2, 1797, until November 21, 1816, in Salem, New Hampshire; was installed at Wenham, Massachusetts, November 26, 1817; was invited to the Professorship of Theology in Bangor, then made vacant by the resignation of Professor Wines, in 1819. He was an admirable instructor. He left a deep and permanent impression on his pupils. He was severely logical in his mental processes. The term *solid* indicates exactly his entire character. On the fourteenth of April, 1831, he died triumphantly, in the twelfth year of his professorship, and the sixty-sixth year of his age. He published six sermons, and a Treatise on Infant Baptism. Dr. Smith was highly prized by Emmons, as a substantial thinker.

### Professor Enoch Pond.

He was born near Franklin, in Wrentham, Massachusetts, July 29, 1791; was graduated at Brown University, 1813; ordained pastor of the church in Ward (now

Digitized by Google

Auburn), Massachusetts, March 1, 1815. He continued pastor of the church in Ward, a little more than thirteen years, during which time the church was favored with two remarkable revivals of religion, in consequence of which about one hundred and sixty persons were added to it, and from being weak and inefficient, it became one of the largest and most flourishing in the county of Worcester.

In June, 1828, Dr. Pond relinquished his charge at Ward, and removed to Cambridgeport, in order to assume the editorial management of the Spirit of the Pilgrims, which had just been established. He continued in this editorial chair four years. In June, 1832, he accepted a call to become Professor of Theology in the Seminary at Bangor, and from 1855 until the present time, has been Professor of Ecclesiastical History in that Institution.

Dr. Pond has published the following volumes: A book of Monthly Concert Lectures, entitled "The World's Salvation"; Memoir of President Davies; Memoir of Susannah Anthony; Memoir of Count Zinzendorf; No Fellowship with Romanism; First Principles of the Oracles of God; The Mather Family; Life of Increase Mather and of Sir William Phipps; The Ancient Church; Memoir of John Knox; The Wreck and the Rescue, or Memoir of Rev. Harrison Fairfield; Life of Wickliffe; The Morning of the Reformation; The Young Pastor's Guide; Pope and Pagan; Review of Swedenborgianism; Life and Works of Plato; Review of Bushnell's "God in Christ"; a volume on Congregationalism, entitled "The Church."

His published pamphlets are: — Reply to Judson on Baptism; Unitarianism Exposed; Apology for Religious Conferences, and a Rejoinder; Letter to Rev. Samuel Nott, in reply to his complaints of Dr. Pond's treatment of Dr. Judson.

Dr. Pond has published about twenty sermons on various subjects, more than twelve of which have appeared in the National Preacher. He has also contributed to the following magazines: — the Spirit of the Pilgrims (two thirds of the first five volumes being from his pen); the Panoplist; the Guardian; the Christian Magazine, published by the Mendon Association (about twenty Articles); Utica Christian Repository, the Hopkinsian Magazine, the Pilgrim, Quarterly Register, the Christian Keepsake, Monthly Christian Spectator, New Englander, McClure's Christian Observatory, Southern Presbyterian, Lord's Literary and Theological Journal, Bibliotheca Sacra (several Articles to each); also many Articles to the Literary and Theological Review, Biblical Repository, and Baptist Christian Review, — the New Brunswick Review, and the American Theological Review.

Dr. Pond has likewise been a frequent contributor to the Boston Recorder, the Congregationalist, the Christian Mirror, and the Maine Evangelist. He has edited and published an edition of the Cambridge Platform, with preface and notes, and of Norton's Life of Cotton. Several of the tracts published by the American Tract Society are also from his pen. The mere record of his publications proves him to be an Emmonite in diligence.

### Rev. Kiah Bailey.

It is a noticeable fact that the first four Professors of Theology in the Bangor Theological Seminary, were pupils of Emmons. This fact suggests the impor-

Digitized by Google

tance of naming, in this connection, the Rev. Mr. Bailey, whose history has been extracted from various private letters, from Blake's History of the Mendon Association, pp. 253–255, but chiefly from the American Congregational Year-Book for 1858.

This good man was "born in Brookfield, Mass., 11th March, 1770. He removed with his parents to Haverhill, N. H., 1775, when the country was a wilderness. In 1783, his father removed, with his family, to Newbury, Vt., where he fitted for college, under the instruction of Rev. Jacob Wood, minister of the place. While pursuing his preparatory studies, he taught the first school ever kept in Ryegate, Vt., 1789. He entered Dartmouth College in the autumn of the same year, and was graduated in 1793, with the honor of delivering the Greek oration. It was during his Sophomore year, in the autumn of 1790, that, after a long and painful law-work, as he himself expressed it, 'the rebellion of his heart was hopefully conquered, and *grace — free, sovereign grace triumphed.*'

"From this moment his whole soul was set on the work of the ministry; and in October, 1793, immediately after he was graduated, he commenced the study of theology with Dr. Emmons, and was admitted into his church in May, 1794. The next month, June, 1794, he was licensed to preach by the Mendon Association. He had calls to settle in Milford, Northampton, Cornish, N. H., and Ashby, Mass. but he chose his field of labor among the feeble and destitute churches of the then Province of Maine. He was ordained pastor of the Congregational Church in Newcastle, Me., October 7, 1797 — at that time a church of three persons only, besides the pastor. The little vine, by God's blessing on his labors was increased, not a hundred, but sixty-fold, before the time of his dismission, which was at his own request, in 1824. Several revivals had been enjoyed, particularly one in 1816 and 1817, which was of special power and extent.

"After leaving Maine, Mr. Bailey preached two years and a half at Greensboro', Vt., three years and a half at Thornton, N. H., and returned in 1833 and settled on a farm in Hardwick, Vt., where his parents died, and where he chose to close his own earthly pilgrimage. From this time he preached only occasionally in vacant congregations, but kept up his interest in the enterprises of the church, and the objects of reform, till the very close of his earthly career.

"Few men in the State of Maine have been more extensively engaged in all the benevolent movements of the churches there than Mr. Bailey. He was a Representative from Maine to the Legislature of Massachusetts, in 1819 and 1820; a member of the Board of Overseers of Bowdoin College, eight or nine years; acted at the election of the first, second, and third Presidents of the College. He was President of the Maine Missionary Society; and also one of the Board of Trustees; was one of the Trustees of the Maine Charity School, and also Secretary of the same; he was a Trustee of the Society for Theological Education in Maine, instituted June 27, 1811, incorporated February 27, 1812, and was its Secretary several years. This was the second education society in New England. Mr. Bailey labored hard, journeyed, wrote, prayed, and supplicated with God and man, and finally merged the Society into the Bangor Theological Institution, which was incorporated by the Massachusetts Legislature February 4, 1814. Mr. Bailey was named in the charter as one of the Trustees — was the Secretary for five or six years of the Board of Trustees. He drew up the by-laws of the Seminary, and did what he could to make it a rich blessing to the church. He corresponded more, and labored more abundantly than any

Digitized by Google

other man, to build up the infant Seminary. He has been well called a founder of the Institution. It has been often said, that if he had not studied theology with Dr. Emmons, the Institution at Bangor would not have come into existence."

'About the year 1802, Mr. Bailey commenced an effort to establish an Academy in Newcastle. As this was to be the Academy for the county, he had powerful competitors. But he succeeded, and secured an act of incorporation, and a fund of about thirteen thousand dollars for the Lincoln County Academy. Rev. Daniel Haskel, subsequently President of Burlington College, was the first Preceptor, and Rev. Dr. Beman, of Troy, was the second. Rev. Mr. Bailey was Secretary, Treasurer, and Agent of this Institution for about twenty years, and when he left Newcastle it was a prosperous school." The zealous man was wont to say: "I claim the Academy at Newcastle, and the Theological School at Bangor, as my own children. Not that others did not help, — but on me the burden of laying plans and of executing them without funds, for five or six years, rested."

'The Lincoln and Kennebec Religious Tract Society was instituted May, 1802, and printed and distributed about thirty thousand tracts. The work of selecting, preparing, printing, and distributing these tracts, rested very much on Mr. Bailey, as Secretary. So the Christian Monitor, a magazine published by the Maine Missionary Society six or seven years, and which did much to promote the cause of missions, depended very much on Mr. Bailey for matter and for distribution. For several years, he was one of the sub-Committee to aid in locating and directing the missionaries sent by the Massachusetts Missionary Society into Maine.

'In 1794 he married Abigail Goodhue, a lady who having been early bereft of both her parents, enjoyed the parental attention and instruction of Rev. Samuel Hopkins, D. D., and Rev. Dr. Spring, of whose church she was a member. On the model of these men her mind was formed. She was residing in the family of Dr. Emmons, while Mr. Bailey was pursuing his theological studies in the same house. After her marriage to him, she lived nearly twenty-seven years at Newcastle, Maine, where she adorned the vocation of a pastor's wife. She was particularly useful to the young men in the Newcastle Academy, more than a hundred of whom boarded, at different times, in her family, and some of whom became interested there in religious truth. She was a friend and correspondent of some distinguished *literati*.'

Mrs. Bailey was among the first to labor for the establishment of a theological school at Bangor. After her decease, her Memoir was published in a volume by Rev. Daniel O. Morton, author of the Life of Rev. Levi Parsons. Mr. Morton says respecting Mrs. Bailey, and two other ladies with whom she coöperated: "But for their prayers and influence, perhaps, the Theological Institution of Bangor might not have been established." In 1814 she writes: "Blessed be God for honoring me, unworthy as I am, with giving the first mite to the treasurer for [Bangor Seminary]. This was the free-will offering of a number of females in different places, whose hearts the Lord has made to feel for their fellow immortals. The Lord bless them individually with his special love. The little sum was one hundred and sixty dollars. The Lord make it to increase a thousand fold. Blessed be God for making me his almoner." "Mrs. Bailey persevered," adds her biographer, "in this labor of love, till she had collected and paid to the treasurer of the Maine Theological Seminary, nearly two thousand dollars." (See Memoir of Dr. Samuel Hopkins, pp. 95–97.)

Digitized by Google

'Mrs. Bailey had a very retentive memory; a lively, chastened imagination; an ardent, unquenchable thirst for knowledge. She became a ready writer, and left at her death many volumes of manuscripts, diaries, etc. She loved and read her Bible much; was a strict observer of the Sabbath, always at meeting, if possible; loved to do good; was active in all benevolent movements. She lived near to God. Her last sickness was short, and she fell asleep in Jesus, most peacefully, on the 18th of March, 1846, at Hardwick, Vt., aged 89 years and 10 months.

'Rev. Mr. Bailey's published works were, nine single sermons; — two doctrinal and two ordination sermons, — one at the ordination of Rev. Mr. Spaulding, at Penobscot, and the other of Rev. Mr. Beaman, Portland, Me.; one sermon before the Maine Missionary Society, one at the opening of the Lincoln Academy, one on the Evils of War, one on Intemperance, and one against Fashionable Amusements. He edited a reprint of *Earle's Sacramental Exercises*, published by Lincoln & Edmands, Boston, 1813; *The Preciousness of Christ* — edition, 400 copies: Armstrong, Boston; *Two Worlds Displayed;* together with tracts and magazines, etc.

'In the anti-Masonic contest, 1829, he wrote for the journals more, perhaps, than any other person in New England; and he was no less zealous in the anti-slavery cause. In one year he wrote over seventy pieces for the press, and for seven years his communications, many of which appeared in the *North Star*, would amount to fifty a year.

'His own estimate of his multiplied labors was very humble. "'If there was any thing of good in them," he remarked, "give God the glory. I have been a *poor, miserable, unprofitable servant*, and must perish, if God does not have mercy upon me. If saved at all, it must *be by grace*."

'Mr. Bailey left in manuscript, a Treatise on Baptism, drawn wholly from the Bible, in four sermons, covering ten sheets, on (1) the import of the institution, (2) the elements, (3) how performed, (4) infant baptism. This work, he thought, met the argument for immersion better than any he had seen. But he could not afford the expense of printing it.'

Mr. Bailey died at Hardwick, Vermont, August 17, 1857, aged eighty-seven years. He had been a preacher of the Gospel sixty-three years.

## President Stephen Chapin.

The great majority of the Franklin students remained firm Congregationalists. A few of them became pastors of Presbyterian churches. Two of them were Baptists. One of these became such after he had entered the congregational ministry. He rendered essential service to his adopted denomination as an instructor of youth. The following is his history:

Rev. Dr. Chapin was born in Milford, Mass., November 4, 1778; at the age of eight or nine years he became, as he believed, a child of God; at the age of seventeen he became a member of the Milford Congregational church; was graduated at Harvard College in 1804, having among his class-mates Professor Andrews Norton, and Judge Ashur Ware; was ordained June 19 1805, Pastor of the Congregational Church in Hillsborough, New Hampshire · his ordination sermon being preached by his theological instructor, Emmons.

In his pastorate at Hillsborough, Dr. Chapin "exhibited that firm adherence to what he believed to be the teachings of the Bible, which eminently characterized his

Digitized by Google

subsequent life. His conscientious convictions compelled him to oppose the Half-way Covenant, or the baptism of children whose parents made no profession of having felt the power of religion. Through his influence the church adopted an Orthodox Confession of Faith, and required a profession of experimental piety as a condition of membership; and their numbers were increased by the addition of many efficient members. On the 30th of July, 1809, he took leave of this church, and, on the 26th of November following, was installed as Pastor of the Congregational Church in Mount Vernon, N. H. In this year he was married to Miss Sarah Mosher, of Hollis, N. H. He remained in connection with the Mount Vernon Church for nine years, — until the change of his sentiments on the Subjects and Mode of Baptism. On account of this change he was dismissed from this church on the 18th of November, 1818, and in the same month was baptized by the Rev. Dr. Baldwin, and received a member of the Baptist Church in Boston, of which Dr. B. was pastor.

"It seems that some two years previous to this time, for the purpose of strengthening himself in the practice of Infant Baptism, he determined on a careful review of Ecclesiastical History. The results at which he arrived were very different from what he had anticipated, and led him to a fresh examination of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and finally to a change in his ecclesiastical connections. In 1819, he published a series of Letters, giving the processes through which his own mind passed in his inquiries after truth and duty."

In the autumn of 1819 he was ordained Pastor of the Baptist Church at North Yarmouth, Maine; in 1823 was appointed Professor of Theology in the College at Waterville, Maine; after discharging the duties of this Professorship with distinguished ability for the term of five years, he was inaugurated March, 1829, President of the Columbian College, Washington, D. C. 'For twelve years he labored as President of this Institution, with unflagging zeal and energy.' His work was crowned with signal success. No one could have performed it, who was not gifted with herculean strength. His health became enfeebled, and having resigned his Presidency, he lived three or four years on a small farm which he had purchased in the vicinity of Washington.

"It was on a cool and bright autumnal day, October 1, 1845, when the exercises of the Annual Commencement of his beloved Columbian College were being performed in a crowded assembly, honored by the presence of the President of the United States, and other distinguished members of the National Government, — that the spirit of Chapin, in his own quiet chamber, — his eye beaming with hope, and radiant with light from another world, — took its flight to the abodes of the blessed. He had nearly completed the sixty-seventh year of his age. Due honors were paid to his memory, not only by his friends and the public at Washington, but by various Religious and Benevolent Societies in different parts of the country."

Dr. Chapin gave to the world eleven publications, written with remarkable purity, precision, chasteness, and elegance. He wrote and read Lectures on Intellectual and Moral Philosophy and Logic. "His favorite metaphysical authors were Locke and Reid." His greatest distinction was his consistent and fervent piety. — (The preceding narrative is compiled chiefly from a letter of Rev. Dr. Alvah Woods, in Sprague's Annals of the Pulpit, Vol. V. pp. 673–677.)

### Rev. William Jackson, D. D.

He was born in Cornwall, Connecticut, December 14, 1768; was graduated at



Digitized by Google

Dartmouth College in 1790; then became Principal of an Academy in Wethersfield, Connecticut; afterward studied theology with Dr. Samuel Spring and Dr. Emmons. Having been approbated as a preacher by the Mendon Association, June 4, 1793, he was invited to the pastorate of the church in Dorset and East Rupert, Vermont. Declining this invitation, he repaired for the improvement of his health to the southern part of the Union; but, after the lapse of three years, he received a second call from the church above named, and he took the pastoral care of the church September 27, 1796.

In this office he labored with marked fidelity, and enjoyed repeated instances of special religious interest, for the period of forty-six years. Five years before his death, he received the aid of a colleague; and then, in addition to his occasional services in the pulpit, he took a class in the Sabbath school, and became as punctual and enthusiastic in this office as were any of the youthful teachers. Although an invalid through life, he was yet a young man at the age of seventy-four. "He would have been young at ninety." He died October 15, 1842.

The sermons of Dr. Jackson were solid, "logical, coherent, convincing, opening to appeals the most earnest and irresistible." He was unconscious of his manner while preaching; but it was peculiarly solemn and dignified. Like his teacher Emmons, he did not write what he called the "improvement" of his discourses, but delivered it *extempore*. One of his constant auditors has remarked: "I never wish to hear any greater eloquence than comes from my minister, when he gets through his notes, and shuts up his Bible." Like Emmons, also, he was "distinguished for a keen and ready wit, and for shrewd, pointed, and laconic sayings." But in the pulpit, he never excited a smile. When suddenly interrupted in his study, he was often found in the attitude of a suppliant. Hence his devotional services were full of unction and rich feeling. "It was worth a journey to Dorset, to hear that prayer," said a guest who had united with Dr. Jackson in morning worship. A hearer describing one of his impressive discourses, remarked: "I hardly knew whether I was in the body, or out of the body. I saw his whole person trembling and shaken by the action of his mind and heart." He resembled Robert Hall in the mastery which his vigorous mind had gained over his frail and agonized body. "A more pure-minded man," says Dr. Maltby, "rarely visits the world."

Dr. Jackson married a descendant of John Rogers. She had been a resident in the family of Rev. Dr. Samuel Spring. She was a lady of rare culture. Her five children received an exact and kindly discipline, both intellectual and moral. One of them is Rev. Samuel Cromwell Jackson, D. D., the Assistant Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education. Another was the wife of Rev. John Maltby, D. D., of Bangor, Maine. Another is the wife of Rev. Nathaniel Beach of Millbury, Massachusetts. Still another was the wife of Rev. Cyrus Hamlin, Missionary of the American Board at Constantinople. She died at Rhodes, November 14, 1850. Her Memoir was printed in 1854, in a duodecimo volume of three hundred and twenty pages. Both her father and mother were early distinguished for their missionary, which was the Hopkinsian, spirit.

But it was for his zeal in the education of youth, that Dr. Jackson claims our special notice here. "He was a correct and thorough scholar in the ancient classics, having a special fondness for them which he retained to the close of his life. With some of the standard classical authors he was very familiar, being able to repeat large

Digitized by Google

portions of them from memory, and sometimes to hear recitations in them without a text-book. He took much pleasure in introducing others to an acquaintance with them."

"It had been his practice to receive young men as pupils from his first settlement, carrying them through their whole course preparatory to entering college. As many as *fourteen* have already entered the ministry from his religious society alone, which was never large — a greater number, it is believed, than have ever been brought into the ministry from all the Congregational societies in the whole county beside. And most of these individuals, perhaps nearly all, would never have obtained a public education and become preachers of the gospel, but for his advice and encouragement and his assistance as their teacher. Some have also been brought forward mainly by his instrumentality at first, who have entered the other learned professions, besides many from adjacent towns, who were under similar obligations to him. It is probable that more young men in the small town of which he was pastor, have acquired a classical education and been fitted for public stations of usefulness, through his agency in encouraging and aiding them to commence a literary course, than have been led to a similar course in any other town of equal population and means in the State." — (Discourse at the funeral of Dr. Jackson, by Rev. Joseph D. Wickham, Principal of Burr Seminary.)

"When Middlebury College was planned, Dr. Jackson was there, the intimate adviser of the men whose funds lie at the foundation of that institution, and the first *elected* member of the Corporation. Said Dr. Bates, while President of that College, 'If I wanted a thing done, I would enlist Dr. Jackson in it.' He was the confidential adviser of Mr. Joseph Burr of Manchester; and his views prevailed with that gentleman to leave a legacy of twelve thousand dollars to Middlebury College, and another of ten thousand dollars to found the Seminary which now bears his name in the place where he resided" [The Burr Seminary]. — (Sprague's Annals, II. 340.)

In 1804, Dr. Jackson originated the "Evangelical Society" "to aid pious and needy young men, in acquiring education for the work of the gospel ministry." "The first regular meeting of the society was held in his parish, on the last Tuesday of June, 1804, at which Rev. Nathaniel Hall of Granville, preached the opening sermon. The plan of the Society was to aid suitable candidates for the ministry by loans, without interest, for not more than six years." Dr. Jackson was the first President of the Society. In 1806, "when exhausted by his labors in a revival, he took a journey on horseback for the benefit of his health. During this journey, he visited Salem, Marblehead, Newburyport, and Boston, collecting fifteen hundred dollars as a fund for the assistance of pious young men." — (Memoir of Mrs. Hamlin, p. 20.) This was the first important Education Society in the land. It aided more than fifty young men for their great work. It continued its usefulness for twelve years, when it was superseded by the National organization at Boston.

Professor Porter, of Andover, is well known to have been one of the earliest and most persevering counsellors and advocates of the National Society. He was a member of the committee to frame its Constitution in 1815, and he bequeathed his estate to it at his death in 1834. When a member of Dartmouth College, he was a cherished friend of Dr. Jackson, and remained intimate with him through life. He said once: "Dr. Jackson is the only minister of his age, who has kept up with the times." Long

Digitized by Google

before he became associated with the Andover Seminary, Professor Porter held frequent interviews with Dr. Jackson in regard to the eleemosynary plans for educating indigent youth. From these interviews he derived many hints and impulses, which resulted in his eminent services to the American Education Society.

### Rev. John Bowers Preston.

He was born in Fairfield, New Jersey, October 3, 1770; was graduated at the University of Pennsylvania, in 1793; ordained at Rupert, Vt., February 8, 1798. He was an associate of Dr. Jackson in founding the "Evangelical Society," and was the President of its Board of Trustees at the time of his decease. "He was an able instructor of students in theology." His excellent wife was a parishioner of Dr. Emmons. He died February 21, 1813.

### Professor Nathaniel Kendrick, D.D.

This patron of learning was born in Hanover, New Hampshire, April 22, 1777. Although a Baptist, he studied theology six months under the care of Rev. Dr. Burton, the Congregational Pastor of Thetford, Vt. On the 16th of December, 1802, he left Hanover, N. H. for Franklin, Mass., and *after a journey of nine days*, he reached the house of Dr. Emmons on Saturday, December 25, and heard his new instructor preach on the following day. He continued his studies in the house of Emmons about three months, but preserved habits of intimacy with his teacher for many years afterward. He cherished, through life, an exalted opinion of Emmons, but did not agree with him on various theological topics. He finished his studies with Dr. Baldwin, and was aided in them by Dr. Stillman, of Boston. He remained in that city about one year. He was early distinguished for his missionary spirit, and he performed much missionary labor. After preaching nearly a twelvemonth in Bellingham, a town contiguous to Franklin, he was ordained over the Baptist Church in Lansingburgh, N. Y., August 15, 1805. He became pastor of the Baptist Church in Middlebury, Vermont, in 1810. He took the pastorate of the Baptist Churches in Eaton, N. Y. in July, 1817. His ministry was crowned with signal instances of religious awakening. During a large part of it, he combined the office of a teacher of youth with his pastorate. He was an overseer of Hamilton College from 1825 until 1827.

On the twenty-fourth of September, 1817, Dr. Kendrick and a few of his Christian brethren formed the plan of a Theological School, which has since become the Madison University. "He was one of the most efficient founders and supporters of this Institution, and was identified with it for thirty years. In 1820 he was appointed to deliver lectures in it three times a week, on Moral Philosophy and Theology. In 1822, he became a permanent Professor of Systematic and Pastoral Theology, and of Moral Philosophy in the Institution. He retained this Professorship until his decease, although during the last eight years of his life he devoted the greater part of his time to the Corresponding Secretaryship of the New York Baptist Education Society. He preached the first Annual Sermon before the Society in 1818, and was for thirty years a workman in its behalf. He died, September 11, 1848, aged seventy-one years."

"He was one of nature's and of grace's noblemen, formed alike physically, intellectually and morally, on a large and generous scale. In person he was tall [six feet three inches] and commanding; his form and face eminently fitted to inspire respect and veneration." "His character was developed and rounded into remarkable sym-

Digitized by Google

metry." He was a lover and a preacher of the high doctrines of Calvinism. His Memoir has been published in a volume of two hundred and eighty-five pages, 12mo.

### Rev. Joseph Emerson.

This fervid preacher was born in Hollis, New Hampshire, October 13, 1777; was graduated at Harvard College in 1798, being the honored class-mate of Dr. William E. Channing, Judge Story, and Professor Sidney Willard; was a Tutor in the College from 1801 to 1803. In July, 1799, he commenced the study of divinity at Franklin, and with some intermissions he continued his study for two years.

Dr. Emmons has written of him: "Mr. Emerson, like other young gentlemen with whom I have been acquainted while preparing for the ministry, not only conducted with propriety and agreeably to his Christian profession, but exhibited some peculiar traits of character which qualified him for great and extensive usefulness, through the whole course of his life. He possessed a strong, clear, retentive, discriminating mind. He was capable of rising to eminence in any branch of learning to which he turned his particular attention. He had a taste for reading, and especially for reading the Scriptures. He was as good a *biblical* as *classical* scholar. He studied the deep things of God, and acquired very clear and consistent views of the peculiar and fundamental doctrines and duties of Christianity. He chose the work of the ministry, not for the sake of ease, or popularity, or filthy lucre; but for the sake of employing all his time and talents to the best advantage, in promoting the spiritual and eternal interests of mankind. So long as his health allowed him to pursue his chosen work, he uniformly maintained the character of an able and faithful minister of the Gospel. And after his feeble health constrained him a second time to relinquish his pastoral relation to a particular church, he turned his whole attention to a business for which he was eminently qualified, and in which he was extensively useful." — (Emmons's Letter in the Memoir of Rev. Joseph Emerson, pp. 120, 121.)

This enthusiastic student was ordained Pastor of the Congregational Church at Beverly, September 21, 1803, and after an animated, energetic and laborious pastorate of thirteen years, he was dismissed September 21, 1816. The zeal of the Lord's house absorbed and consumed him.

In 1818, he established at Byfield, Massachusetts, a Female Seminary, which in 1821 he removed to Saugus, Massachusetts, and in 1824 to Wethersfield, Connecticut, where he continued to teach until, lamented by a large community, he died, May 13, 1833, in the fifty-sixth year of his age.

His career as a teacher, though often interrupted by physical debility, "helped to form a new era in female education." Rev. Dr. Caleb J. Tenney has written of him:

"In the introduction and establishment of Female Seminaries in New England, he was very much a pioneer. Such celebrity did he secure to his institution for its system, accuracy, thoroughness, and Christian character, that far and wide he spread before the public mind the importance of female education. His may properly be called a *parent* institution. For several of his pupils and many others followed his example in establishing schools of a high order for young ladies. His usefulness in this respect has surpassed that of any other teacher of females within the last half century." — (Memoir of Emerson, p. 435.)



Digitized by Google

It was not merely in his school-room that Mr. Emerson educated other minds. He was a spirited and a voluminous author and editor of books for the young. *Two hundred thousand copies of his Evangelical Primer* have been studied by children. His edition of Watts on the "Improvement of the Mind," with questions; also of Whelpley's Compend of History, with questions, and an Imperial and Biographical Chart; his Union Catechism, his Biblical Outline, his Astronomical Lectures, his "Questions to Goodrich's History of the United States," his Chart of History, his Poetic Reader, his numerous essays and letters on education, aroused a previously unwonted interest in the processes of training the mind. He also published Lectures on the Millennium, and various disquisitions on practical and scientific theology.

He felt an intense interest in all the benevolent enterprises of the day. His third wife was a sister of Miss Hasseltine, the first wife of Rev. Adoniram Judson. At an interesting crisis in Mrs. Judson's history, when "the general opinion was decidedly opposed to" her departure from her native land, when "no female had ever left America as a missionary to the heathen," when only two or three individuals advised her to begin this noble enterprise, Mr. Emerson was one of these advisers; "probably he did more for this object than any other person, or *than all others*. Indeed, at one time, it is doubtful whether she would have gone, *but for his efforts*."— (For a full account of this remarkable man, see his Memoir by his brother, Rev. Ralph Emerson, D. D., Professor at Andover, pp. 454.)

### Professor Alexander Metcalf Fisher.

A tragic interest envelops this name. The winning person of Mr. Fisher, his bright eye, his accurate conversation, his varied intelligence, manifesting itself through all his reserve of manner, will never be forgotten by his friends.

He was born in Dr. Emmons's parish, July 22, 1794. His mother was a woman of uncommon mathematical talent. His brother furnished the mathematical calculations for the Christian Almanac, for several years after it was commenced. At the age of nine years, Alexander wrote his exercises in arithmetic in a style which indicated a rare mathematical and mechanical genius. His manuscripts at the age of eleven years were prognostics of a bright career in the future. He was graduated with signal honor at Yale College in 1813. "At every exercise during his collegiate course," says Prof. Kingsley, "whether recitation or lecture, he was always present, always attentive, and always prepared." He was then eminent for his originality of mind, his inquisitiveness, his acumen, his decided genius for the mathematics, and his general scholarship.

Loving all science, he felt a scholar's interest in theology. Without a definite purpose of preaching the Gospel, without being even a member of any church, he commenced in 1814 a course of theological study with his pastor, and, by the advice of Emmons, he afterward spent nearly a year, 1814–15, at the Seminary in Andover.

Professor Pond was a fellow-student with him at Franklin, and writes thus: "Young Fisher was fond of speculating on religious truth, of examining thoroughly all the objections against it; and if his love of discussion drew him into close dispute, he enjoyed it the more. He indulged himself in greater freedom of debate with our venerable teacher, than would have been appropriate for myself to use, but this was a result of his long and intimate acquaintance with his pastor. I do not mean to say

Digitized by Google

that his style of debate was disrespectful, but it was free and close, and the Doctor seemed to enjoy it as much as he did [see pp. 77, 78 above].

"On one occasion he read an essay on the Perseverance of the Saints, and denied the doctrine. He believed in election, and that all who were elected would be saved; but then many are converted who are not of the elect; and such, of course, will fall away and perish. This opened a new vein of discussion, which it took time and labor to close. It devolved on the doctor to prove, which he did most substantially, that the elect and the regenerate are identical; that whom God predestinates, them he also calls; and whom he calls, them he justifies; and whom he justifies, them he glorifies."

After a lengthened process of inquiry, the keen intellect of the pupil saw the substantial truth of Calvinism. His later theological Essays develop the sharp lines which the mind of Emmons had drawn upon him. They are not in complete harmony with the system of his teacher, but they embrace some of its distinctive and essential principles. His views were his own, and evinced his penetration, as well as care for the exact truth.

From the year 1815 to 1817 this accomplished metaphysician was a tutor in Yale College. In 1817 he was appointed Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy in that Institution. Here his colleague, Professor Benjamin Silliman, Senior, writes: "Mr. Fisher was the most extraordinary man of his years, whom I have ever known. Acquisitions equal to his at the age of twenty-eight, I have never seen; nor a more vigorous and acute intellect at any age." "To his extraordinary scientific attainments, he added the finish of classical and polite literature, derived from the best ancient as well as modern sources; his elegant taste embraced the fine arts in their extent and variety; and he was satisfied with nothing, even in the decorum and accommodations of private life, which was not adapted to the same elevated standard."

Among the published writings of Professor Fisher are the following:

1. An Essay on Musical Temperament. Silliman's Journal of Science, Vol. I. pp. 9 and 176.
2. Remarks on Dr. Enfield's Institutes of Natural Philosophy.
3. On Printing Presses and their Theory. Silliman's Journal, Vol. III. p. 311.
4. On Maxima and Minima of Fractions of two variable Quantities. Ib. Vol. V. p. 82.
5. Solutions of various Mathematical Questions under the signature of X. in the American Monthly Magazine.
6. Solutions of various questions under the signature of Nov-Anglus, in Leybourn's Mathematical Repository.
7. Observations on the comet of 1819, &c. Memoirs of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, Vol. IV.

Having already earned a shining name, and being cheered with dazzling prospects of augmented usefulness in the future, the youthful Professor embarked in 1822 in the packet ship Albion, for a visit to the European Universities, and for personal converse with the philosophers whose works he familiarly understood. The scientific world were saddened by hearing that he perished in the wreck of the Albion, on the coast of

Digitized by Google

Ireland, *within a hundred yards from the shore,* April 22, 1822, at the early age of twenty-seven years and seven months. His marble monument stands in the rural burial-ground at Franklin, containing the following lines:

"Thy grave, O! Fisher, is the rolling flood,
Thy urn the rock eternal, reared by God!
Yet near thy home, reared by affection's hand,
To speak thy name this simple stone shall stand.
How dark the scene, till Faith directs on high,
Beyond those orbs that charmed thy youthful eye.
There now thy noble mind, expanding, glows
In floods of light, nor pain nor darkness knows.
Youth, Genius, Knowledge, Virtue past away
From Earth's dim shores to Heaven's eternal day."

Soon after the decease of Prof. Fisher, Prof. J. L. Kingsley, of Yale College, delivered and published a eulogy upon him. An obituary notice of him appeared in Silliman's Journal, Vol. V. pp. 367–376. Dr. Emmons also published a sermon commemorative of him. Prof. Olmsted of Yale College has more recently delineated his character.

## John Crane, D. D.

He was born in Norton, Massachusetts, March 26, 1756, of parents belonging to the Society of Friends; was graduated at Harvard College in 1780, was the acting pastor of the church in Northbridge, Massachusetts, from June 25, 1783, until March 14, 1832, and was the nominal pastor until August 31, 1836, when he died in the eighty-first year of his age, and the fifty-fourth of his pastorate.

In his half century sermon, he said: "The fifty years which I have passed in this place have been full of labor and hurry. I was employed more than thirty years in teaching youth. I have instructed more than a hundred young men in their preparation for admission to college. [Among these students were Rev. Dr. Joel Hawes, Rev. Dr. Willard Preston of Savannah, Georgia, Rev. Cyrus Kingsbury, missionary to the Choctaws.] I have written about four thousand sermons, and probably delivered about two hundred *extempore* discourses." In 1812, Dr. Crane made an effort to establish an Education Society on an extended scale, to aid pious young men in preparing for the ministry.

"Several revivals marked his ministry. In 1800, twenty-seven were added to the church; in 1809, twenty-eight were added. In 1829–30, about thirty were joined to the followers of Christ In 1831, almost seventy were gathered into the fold."—(Hist. of Mendon Association, p. 123.) "He was an extensive reader as well as vigorous thinker; and you could not converse long with him without having evidence of both."— Dr. Joel Hawes, in *Sprague's Annals*, Vol. II. p. 215. He gave to the world eleven publications, one of them being a volume of eight discourses on baptism. For several years he represented the town of Northbridge in the General Court. "He exerted a commanding influence in the region in which he resided."—(Sprague's Annals, II. 216.)

Digitized by Google

### Professor Calvin Park, D. D.

He was born at Northbridge, Mass., September 11, 1774; was fitted for college by his pastor, Rev. Dr. Crane; was graduated at Brown University in 1797; was an officer in the college twenty-five years, during which time he instructed more than seven hundred pupils, among whom were the missionaries Dr. Judson and Dr. Kingsbury. He also directed the studies of several young men in theology. As a teacher in schools and in the college, he had more than a thousand pupils. He was pastor of the Evangelical church in Stoughton, Mass., from 1826 until 1840. He died January 5, 1847. He was one of the Founders of the Congregational Board of Publication. He never resided in Franklin, but after having pursued his theological studies with Rev. Dr. Austin of Worcester, he finished them under the direction of Dr. Emmons, of whom he often said: "He has given to me my most inspiriting thoughts."

### Rev. Ebenezer Burgess, D. D.

He was born in Wareham, Mass., April 1, 1790; was graduated, with high honor, at Brown University in 1809; was a tutor in the college from 1811 to 1813; was afterwards Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy in the University of Vermont. In 1817, he was selected by Rev. Samuel J. Mills, Jr., as his companion in exploring the Western coast of Africa, with the design to select the most eligible site for a colony of free negroes to be transported thither by the American Colonization Society, then recently formed. Dr. Burgess embarked with Mr. Mills, November 16, 1817, for London, with the purpose of sailing thence for the African coast. Having labored industriously and successfully on that coast more than two months, he embarked for London, May 22, 1818, and thence for his native land.

Since the fourteenth of March, 1821, he has been a devoted pastor in Dedham, Mass. For a period of forty years he has remained a most liberal benefactor of schools, colleges, theological seminaries, domestic and foreign missions. Few men have accomplished more than he, as an almoner of the Lord's bounty. He studied theology in part at Andover, and in part with Dr. Emmons whose Works he has distributed, with his accustomed generosity, among the ministers who needed his benefactions.

### Rufus Graves and Samuel Fowler Dickinson.

The former of these gentlemen was born in Sunderland, September 27, 1758; graduated at Dartmouth College in 1795; studied theology with Emmons, but did not enter the pastoral office. He early became interested in Amherst College, and performed the work of an agent in its behalf with singular enthusiasm and perseverance. It has been often said, that the college would never have been endowed, if he had not devoted his restless energies to it, in the most critical period of its history.

The second of the above-named gentlemen was born in Amherst, Mass., in 1774; graduated at Dartmouth College in 1798. Having studied theology one year with Dr. Emmons, he found his health inadequate to the duties of the pulpit, and he entered the legal profession. "He was one of the originators of Amherst

Digitized by Google

Academy and of Amherst College, and was one of the original Trustees of both these Institutions." In 1833, he removed his residence from Amherst, Mass., to Cincinnati, Ohio, where he was an efficient laborer for Lane Theological Seminary. In 1835, he removed to Hudson, Ohio, where he rendered important services to the Western Reserve College. He died April 22, 1834.

### § 4. *The Interest of Emmons's Pupils in the Work of Missions.*

The great object of Emmons as a theological teacher was to develop in his pupils a spirit of self-denial. "If we love our office," he was wont to say, "if we are thankful for it, how readily shall we 'take up the cross,' despise the pomp and splendor of the world, and silently walk in the low vale of obscurity, neglect, and dependence." His dislike of National organizations never interfered with his missionary zeal. He began his theological school, thirty-two years before the American Board was organized. After that event, for he was then sixty-five years of age, he received but few pupils, although he was often importuned to continue his labors as a teacher. Still, the following record may be appended to the narrative of his efforts in behalf of missions, for it illustrates the fact, that he breathed into all who stood near him, a desire to evangelize the desolate parts of our own land and the world.

#### Rev. Herman Daggett.

This devout man was born in Walpole, Mass., Sept. 11, 1766; was a resident in the contiguous town of Wrentham during his early youth; was a nephew of President Naphthali Daggett, of Yale College; was graduated at Brown University, in 1788. "Shortly after his graduation," says Dr. Sprague in his Annals, Mr. Daggett "placed himself as a theological student under the direction of the Rev. Dr. Emmons, who even at that early period, had acquired the reputation of being very learned in his profession. Having spent about a year in his preparatory studies, he was licensed to preach by the [Mendon] Association, in October, 1789, and preached for the first time, on the succeeding Sabbath, in Dr. Emmons's pulpit." He was settled nearly four years as a pastor at Southampton, Long Island, three years at Westhampton, Long Island; between five and six years in Brookhaven, Long Island.

On the sixth of May, 1818, he was inaugurated Principal of the celebrated Mission School at Cornwall, Connecticut. Governor Treadwell and Mr. Daggett delivered addresses on the occasion. Henry Obookiah was a favorite pupil of Mr. Daggett.

The Cornwall school "consisted of youth and children from various Pagan nations. Though they were only about thirty in number, there were natives of Sumatra,

Digitized by Google

China, Bengal, Hindostan, Mexico, New Zealand; of the Society Islands and Marquesas Islands; of the Isles of Greece and of the Azores; there were specimens also of the various North American Indian tribes — Cherokees, Choctaws, Osages, Oneidas, Tuscaroras, Senecas, and the tribe at St. Regis in Canada. In age they ranged from mere childhood to adult years. The languages which they spoke, rivalled in point of number those which were heard at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. There was, of course, a great variety of taste and disposition and character, in these representatives of so many barbarous nations. A more difficult task can hardly be conceived than the management of such a school as this; and yet Mr. Daggett, by his great kindness and wisdom, succeeded in giving to the school a very harmonious character, and in rendering it, for a season, the instrument of no inconsiderable usefulness. It became, however, after a few years, obnoxious to public censure, on account of the intermarriage of two or three Indians with respectable young ladies in the neighborhood, and in the year 1826, it was dissolved. Mr. Daggett's connection with it continued nearly six years, terminating in 1824. Early in that year his health sunk so low as to forbid his performing his duties as teacher, or even leaving his house. In consequence of this continued indisposition, he tendered his resignation as Principal."

"He was accustomed to preach on the Sabbath to his pupils; and others in the neighborhood who were disposed, had the privilege of attending on his ministrations. His pupils were generally greatly attached to him, and not a few of them were believed to have been radically and permanently benefited by his influence." — (Sprague's Annals, II. p. 293.)

On the 19th of May, 1832, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, and after a lengthened period of debility, he "breathed out his life in perfect peace. When it became manifest that the spirit had fled, a prayer was offered by the side of his remains; and then a letter read, which he had addressed to his beloved wife, designed to comfort her, especially in that hour." — (Annals, II. p. 294.)

Mr. Daggett was a gentleman of well ordered mind, and of unusual learning. He was remarkable for his equable temperament. A gentleman intimately acquainted with him on Long Island, relates, "that he was never known to laugh, although of a cheerful and happy turn of mind; to smile was all he ever did." — (Blake's History of Mendon Association, p. 239.)

He published a sermon delivered at the funeral of Rev. Samuel Buell, D. D., the cherished friend of David Brainerd, Jonathan Edwards and President Burr.

## Rev. Thaddeus Osgood.

This gentleman had so many salient points, that a volume is needed for his biography. He did not accept all the distinctive theories of Emmons, but was stirred up by the original thoughts and aphoristic words which animated, when they did not convince, the pupil.

Mr. Osgood was born in Methuen, Mass., was graduated at Dartmouth College in 1803, and "was generally estimated as belonging to the first third of his class in point of scholarship." After he had finished his theological course with Dr. Emmons, and Dr. Lathrop, of West Springfield, he preached as a candidate in the State of Connecticut in 1804. Here he deemed it his duty to deliver a political sermon, denouncing in strong language certain measures of the Democratic party. He was prosecuted for

Digitized by Google

a libel, and for some time was subjected to great annoyance. He afterward abstained from political preaching, and repaired to Canada as a self-sustained Missionary. The Editor of the Montreal Witness says of him:

"Mr. Osgood was characterized by a strong will and indomitable perseverance. A purpose once formed by him was certain to be carried out, if it were at all practicable. No toil, danger, difficulty, or opposition deterred him; and if he could not accomplish it in one way, he would try another and another. In this respect he was truly a Christian hero. I will not say that his plans were always the wisest, or that the best means were always adopted for putting them in execution, but the glory of God and the welfare of man were his objects in them all, and self-denial, I might almost say self-sacrifice, was his chief means of accomplishing what he had devised.

"As a teacher, evangelist, temperance advocate, voluntary agent for the establishment of Sabbath schools, seaman's chaplain, city missionary, jail and hospital visitor, etc., he labored most perseveringly, through the course of a long and active life without salary or reward; and he accomplished, in the aggregate, an amount of good which is altogether incalculable. The societies in connection with which he labored were mainly originated by him, and in fact he was in each case the society himself; for with a resolute will like his, no superior authority of a merely human kind could coexist. But if he took the direction of his own labors, he also acted as collector to sustain them, and as the executive agent to carry out all the details of his philanthropic plans.

"One of the special objects to which Mr. Osgood devoted his whole life, was the Christian nurture of children. He established many Sabbath schools in destitute localities. And a favorite plan with him was to collect second-hand Sabbath school books and papers in the United States, and present them to the most indigent schools of Canada, or to the degraded inhabitants of our cities. In this way he gave to our population a large mass of religious literature. He was the first in Montreal to establish what would be called in England, a 'ragged school,' and to this school he devoted his best affections and most assiduous attention. Indeed, so kind was he to children, and so courteous and considerate to parents, and so decidedly unsectarian was he, that he was beloved by Roman Catholics as well as Protestants; and not only among the children of his school, but in every family which he visited, his memory is affectionately cherished."

"Another of Mr. Osgood's special objects was, the intellectual and moral improvement of boatmen, seamen, and immigrants. He rented an edifice which combined a seaman's chapel, a reading room, a free school for poor children, and some other charities." "In this Bethel," writes a Canadian clergyman, "was his home. Here he gathered the sailors, and the outcasts as he could, and taught them, in the most simple methods, the way of salvation by Christ Jesus. The last time I met him was with a company of his vagrant pupils in that Bethel. When the service and the subsequent conversation were ended, when we had knelt and prayed together and spoken of retiring to rest, he bade me good night, saying that he did not leave the premises. 'But where do you lodge, Mr. Osgood?' And he pointed me to a ladder in one corner of the rough unfinished room, leading to an unfinished loft, and said, 'I lodge up there.' As I retired, I could but weep, and pray while I wept, 'Oh! that we had a thousand more of men like Mr. Osgood.'"

Digitized by Google

Through the wilds of Canada this hard and solitary worker made extensive tours, often amid imminent perils. He visited the indigent inhabitants, and started plans of usefulness, the influence of which is felt at this day. He often lost his regular meals, and more than once was compelled to sleep in the forests, in the open air, using the saddle of his horse for his pillow. In order to procure the funds requisite for publishing and circulating religious books, he journeyed extensively through the United States, everywhere dispensing charities as he found that they were needed. From the Panoplist, such facts as the following are gleaned:

In the year 1808–9, Mr. Osgood travelled three thousand miles in the destitute regions of the United States, and in Lower and Upper Canada, preached two hundred and sixty-five times, collected ten hundred and seventeen dollars, out of which he paid for the printing of upwards of fifty thousand small tracts. In the year 1809–10, he travelled more than two thousand miles, preached a hundred and fifty-eight sermons, collected between twelve and thirteen hundred dollars, which he expended in printing and distributing tracts, establishing libraries, etc. In the year 1810–11, he collected about two thousand dollars, printed tracts in Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, Pennsylvania, and New York. He travelled upwards of three thousand miles, preached one hundred and eighty-eight times. He writes: "I visited the seat of our late president, Mr. Jefferson, by whom I was kindly received and furnished with some pecuniary aid towards carrying on the tract business." In the year 1811–12, he collected nineteen hundred and sixty-five dollars, made an extensive tour through the Canadas, established religious libraries there, secured the pecuniary and moral aid of the bishop of Quebec, and also of the governor of Virginia, and at the close of the year, received from a committee of the General Association of Massachusetts, the following testimonial:

"We believe him to have been faithful, indefatigable, and successful; and that good in a very extensive field, and where it is exceedingly needed, has been effected. The Committee are satisfied in regard to his judgment and fidelity; and, in a plan entirely novel, for the benefit of the frontier of our extensive country and the British colonies, we esteem him competent by his experience to decide the best mode of his future operations."

July 11, 1812. — JEDIDIAH MORSE, ABIEL ABBOT, } Committee.

So high was Mr. Osgood's reputation as an agent, that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church once attempted to secure his services in aid of the Foreign Missionary cause, but were deterred by the consideration that his own chosen sphere of labor was too important to be abandoned.

In the year 1813, he visited Great Britain and collected there large sums of money for the destitute parts of the Canadas. He was enthusiastic in his pleas before the British public, and attracted great attention by his athletic frame and earnest spirit. During his entire life he visited Great Britain seven, perhaps eight times on the same philanthropic errand. Dr. R. D. Mussey, the distinguished Medical Lecturer, and a classmate of Mr. Osgood at Dartmouth College, writes:

"In the summer of 1830, I found him in London. In addition to soliciting funds, he labored as a street preacher and exhorter. On the Sabbath he preached at Moorfields, at that time a cattle-market, and long memorable as the place of the



Digitized by Google

martyrdom of John Rogers. On one occasion, not on the Sabbath, in passing through one of the filthiest lanes in London, he stopped to rebuke profaneness issuing from the mouths of debased and wanton females. Unaccustomed to that sort of salutation, the sisterhood invoked their forces, seized upon his person apparently with a view to drag him into one of their dens; but he, naturally athletic, beat about him with so good a will that he shook off the tormentors and escaped unhurt."

"In his pulpit performances," writes Dr. Mussey, "Mr. Osgood was devout, ardent, emphatic, and impressive." In private religious conferences, for which he had a true passion, his remarks were racy, spirited, often sparkling. In street-discussions he was pointed, sententious, witty, slashing. (See an illustration in Allen's Biographical Dictionary; Art. Osgood.)

During one of his visits to Great Britain, he was requested to give a report of the moneys which he had collected during the visit preceding; and, being unprepared to furnish the requisite documents, he was suspected of having embezzled the funds, and was thrown into prison. A member of the Canadian Parliament, hearing of his incarceration, made the facts known in regard to his philanthropic career, and he was released from his confinement. He again enjoyed the liberality of the men who had incarcerated him. Some of them furnished him an outfit for his return to Canada, and for the resumption of his beneficent work. He is said to have collected, in two of his visits to Great Britain, fourteen thousand dollars for the Canadian enterprise. During all his missions he collected sixteen thousand dollars, besides books, pamphlets, etc. The funds thus raised were safely invested, and still yield an annual income to the cause of philanthropy.

After having been in himself a Tract Society, a Seaman's Friends' Society, a Sabbath School Society, a Prison Discipline Society, a Board of Publication as well as of the Distribution of Books; having visited the jails and the purlieus of crime in Great Britain, the Canadian Provinces, the Western and Southern portions of his own country; having been zealous in prayer meetings, religious conferences, street preaching, and the regular services of the sanctuary, this athletic, enterprising, and indefatigable man terminated his career in Glasgow, Scotland. He died in great peace, after a brief illness, in the year 1852, at the age of seventy-five years.

The Editor of the Montreal Witness writes: "During his last days, Mr. Osgood received every attention that could be rendered by Christian kindness, and his funeral was one of the most largely attended that ever took place in Glasgow. His remains were followed to the grave by a long procession of the best citizens, ministers, and Christian philanthropists, and by the captains of vessels then in that largely frequented port. The shipmasters of the Clyde, also, subscribed a handsome sum to erect a suitable stone to his memory, bearing an inscription expressive of their gratitude for his services to seamen. Thus among strangers rested from his labors one who was, above most men, a pilgrim and a stranger on the earth, and whose citizenship was, to a remarkable degree, in heaven."

### Rev. Joseph Rowell.

This gentleman may be regarded as representing a large class of Dr. Emmons's pupils who gave their children and friends, as jewels, to the missionary work.

Digitized by Google

He was born in Rowley, Mass., in 1767; was graduated at Dartmouth College in 1794; ordained at Cornish, N. H., September 23, 1800; dismissed Feb. 19, 1828; died Nov., 1842, aged seventy-five years. One of his successors in the ministry at Cornish writes (see Blake's Hist. of Mendon Association, p. 267): "Mr. Rowell possessed a mind of great strength and clearness. His sermons were logical in their arrangement, lucid in thought, and easily understood by the hearers. It was a common saying; '*Mr. Rowell's sermons would hold water.*'" He was a diligent student of the original languages of the Bible. He had a large library, well selected. His preaching was eminently doctrinal, but no less practical. He was a bold, fearless, faithful, strongly argumentative, but not a popular preacher.

Four of his sons pursued a collegiate course; one of them, a highly promising candidate for the ministry, died in Amherst College, of the class of 1836; two of them are now foreign missionaries; one of his daughters, and also her husband, died on a mission at the Sandwich Islands. Mr. Rowell himself was through life a foreign missionary at heart. Many young men in his parish were stimulated by his influence to pursue a literary course; five of them are now clergymen. One of our most prominent statesmen, Hon. Salmon Chase, the distinguished Senator of the United States, is a native of Mr. Rowell's parish.

### Rev. Jacob Cram.

This early missionary was born October 12, 1762, at Hampton Falls, N. H.; was graduated at Dartmouth College, in 1782; was settled in Hopkinton, N. H., from Feb. 25, 1789, until Jan. 5, 1792. He afterwards labored as a missionary among the Stockbridge Indians. Mr. Cram, the pupil of Emmons, and Rev. David Avery, the near neighbor of Emmons, were the first two missionaries employed by the Massachusetts Missionary Society. Mr. Cram's commission is dated July 3, 1800, and specifies as his field of labor, "*The region between Whitestown and Genesee River, Western New York.*" He toiled among the Indians mainly. His mission is respectfully noticed in Hotchkins's History of Western New York, p. 184. He was, perhaps in his youth, certainly in his mature life, an eccentric man, and in his old age he was a monomaniac. He died at Exeter, N. H., Dec. 21, 1833, aged seventy-one years.

## § 5. *Emmons's Pupils viewed as Pioneers in establishing Christian and Charitable Institutions.*

It is difficult to distinguish the missionaries from the pioneers, among the Franklin students. Many of them were aggressive workmen, who did not build upon the foundations laid by others, and yet were patronized by no Missionary Board. Others were employed by Missionary Societies, and still were not more really pioneers in their work, than several of their enterprising brethren.

Perhaps no one of these pioneers will illustrate the character of their teacher more vividly, than it is illustrated by the revolu-

Digitized by Google

tionary veteran who is next to be noticed. This patriot, though dissimilar in constitution to Emmons, was through life, and in an eminent degree, under the formative influence of his teacher. He was called to a special intimacy with Emmons by the fact that he married, for his first wife, a lady who belonged to Emmons's parish; and, for his second wife, a lady who had been for many years a friend of the Emmons family.[1]

### Rev. Walter Harris, D. D.

He was born in Lebanon, Connecticut, June 8, 1761. He was graduated at Dartmouth College, in 1787, and was ordained first pastor of the church in Dunbarton, N. H., August 26, 1789. "The father of Walter Harris died shortly before Walter's birth, and he was deprived of his mother before he was sixteen years of age. The three daughters were provided for in other families, and Walter and his brother Nathaniel, two years his senior, were left without parent or guardian, and with a mere pittance of property, to provide for themselves. They enlisted into the Continental Army in May, 1777. In the same year, Nathaniel fell in battle at Philadelphia, and Walter was often in jeopardy. But he served out his term of three years enlistment, part of the time as fifer, and was honorably discharged, May, 1790, then not quite nineteen years of age." "Familiarly acquainted with Dr. Harris for nearly thirty years," says Rev. William Clark, "I have often listened to his recital of stirring incidents, occurring before his eyes during his soldier's life. They were related with an earnestness and eloquence characteristic of the man."

The historian of the Mendon Association adds: 'With Harris's scanty wages and patrimony, he migrated to Lebanon, N. H., purchased a tract of wild land near Dartmouth College, and went alone with his axe into the forest to spend the winter. But the young pioneer was soon surrounded by the thrilling scenes of a powerful revival of religion in the town. And a sermon he heard in the neighborhood, awakened him to his own *actual* destitutions.

'The struggle was long, obstinate, and characteristic of the future man. Wearied with his anxious searchings, and crushed with his increasing convictions, and with his protracted fastings, he resolved, in despair, in the midst of winter, to cast himself down upon the snow in the bleakest place in his field, and there remain in prayer till he perished with cold or found relief. He chose a position on the north side of a stump, near an opening among the trees, where the cold winter's blasts rushed through with unendurable keenness, and he fell upon his knees, determined never to leave the spot till he should hear the voice of mercy. He remained but a short time

[1] His second wife was the widow of Rev. John Cleveland, of North Wrentham, a near clerical neighbor of Emmons, and the son of that Rev. John Cleveland who, in 1744, was expelled from Yale College for attending a meeting of the Separatists. Emmons's townsman, Brainerd, had been expelled only two years before. This incident awakened in Emmons a peculiar regard for his neighbor and friend. In his funeral sermon he highly eulogizes both the father and the son (see orig. ed. of Collected Works, Vol. I. pp. 351–354).

Digitized by Google

before he seemed to hear, in reality, a voice, saying in wrath, — "*What, rebel! seek to limit the Holy One of Israel! Arise! and flee for thy life, — or thou art a dead man!*" He fled to the house in horror at his guilt.

'After passing through what seemed to him a foretaste of the pains of hell, he fell submissively, cordially, upon the sovereign, electing love of God in Christ for salvation. His experience imparted a peculiar thoroughness and fidelity to his subsequent preaching.

'His mind was from this moment directed to the Gospel ministry, as the chosen avocation of his heart. And although without even a common school education, and incumbered with his farm, yet he resolved, after prayerfully weighing the solicitations of friends, that "go to college he would, let the consequences be what they might."

'He first attended a common school; then began the study of the languages with a private teacher, and finally completed his preparation in Moore's Charity School, on Dartmouth plain. At his graduation from college, his commencement exercise was delivered in the Hebrew language.

'The following testimony is given of his college career by one of his instructors: "Rarely have I met with a man more decided and unequivocal, more upright and downright than he. He had a mind of uncommon strength, and unusually patient of labor. He was most distinguished in the solid and useful branches of study."

'After his graduation, he taught a Latin school six months in Boscawen. It was here that an occasional sermon of Dr. Emmons fell into his hands. Having perused it with deep interest, he laid it down, and said with emphasis, "I will study divinity with the author of that sermon, if I can find him." He did find him; and never fit teacher had a fitter learner.'

'After he had finished his theological studies, he received a call to a pastorate in Dunbarton, N. H. He accepted the call on condition that he might return to Dr. Emmons, and pursue his theological studies three months longer. He did so, and was ordained at Dunbarton on the 26th of August, 1789, two months after the church was organized.'

'It is thought,' says Rev. Dr. Burnham of Pembroke, N. H., that 'Dr. Harris, with his beloved brethren, Rev. Moses Bradford, late of Francestown, Rev. Reid Paige, and Rev. Dr. Samuel Wood, late of Boscawen, was the happy instrument, in the hand of God, of effecting an entire revolution in the sentiments and practice of the churches throughout this extensive field of their labors. That field embraced the *then* county of Hillsborough, now Hillsborough, Merrimac, and sections of Rockingham, Strafford, Grafton, and Cheshire. Arminianism, and a lax discipline had extensively prevailed. But by the doctrinal and faithful preaching, the combined efforts, prayers, and influence of these holy men, a purer faith and discipline were introduced and established.'

The parish of Dr. Harris, having but little sympathy with evangelical religion when he was ordained, imposed upon him the most onerous duties. On the very first Sabbath of his pastorate he unfolded the doctrines which he should preach, and the course he should pursue, and then added, with his manly, stirring emphasis: "These doctrines I shall preach, and this course I shall pursue, though you stone me out of the pulpit." "The truths of the Bible," says Rev. William Clark, "as embraced and advocated by Calvin, Bellamy, Emmons, and kindred divines, Dr. Harris made the



Digitized by Google

principal themes of the pulpit. Grasping these fundamental doctrines with his strong mind, and embracing them with all his heart, his statement of them distinct, his definitions clear, his proofs convincing, his illustrations luminous, his manner impressive, his eye piercing, his voice commanding, his personal appearance majestic, he ere long not only silenced all opposition to the great doctrines he proclaimed, but, through the accompanying influence of the Holy Spirit, upon whom he ever relied, his hearers were led to believe, and embrace them. A deathlike stillness pervaded his congregation on the Sabbath, save when that stillness was broken by the sighs and sobs of those convicted of sin. In the third year of Mr. Harris's ministry, the Divine Spirit descended with an energy that moved the entire people. The whole town was shaken. The year 1792 formed a new era in Dunbarton. It introduced into the infant church, not yet three years old, consisting at first of only ten members, nearly eighty persons, among them many of the controlling minds and prominent families in the town, giving it an entirely new religious and moral aspect. Now the great, humbling doctrines of the Bible, before hated and rejected, were received in the love of them. A higher standard of morals was seen, the Sabbath observed with becoming reverence as an institution of God; children were brought by believing parents to the baptismal font, family altars were erected, the community in general presented the aspect of a people fearing God and living for eternity."

In the year 1816 occurred another revival, by means of which forty persons were united to the church. "The year 1826," continues Mr. Clark, "was signalized by still another outpouring of the Spirit. The church had been reduced to less than eighty members, and most of these advanced in life. But the revival in that year greatly enlarged it again, bringing into its bosom nearly eighty persons. Being then a member of the Theological Seminary, Andover, I was invited by Dr. Harris to aid him in his extended parochial labors. Accepting this invitation, I passed two or three weeks with the doctor, and attended the public examination of eighty applicants for admission to the church. The examination, held in the meeting-house, occupied two days, a large and deeply interested congregation being present. It was mid-winter; the roads were blocked with deep, stiff snow-drifts; great exertions were necessary to make them passable, and so anxious were the people generally to be present, that large teams were employed simultaneously through the town, breaking out the highways. No efforts were deemed too great for enjoying the privilege of hearing the recital, by the young converts, of what God had done for them. The scene was most instructive. It developed the kind of religious instruction the converts had received from their minister, and the effect of it, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, on their intellect and heart. Scarcely less profitable was the occasion, so far as related to an exhibition of the great fundamental doctrines of the Bible, than is an examination of students in theology in our Theological Seminaries. The pastor conducted the examination, putting what questions he thought proper to the candidates, one by one, and then calling upon the brethren of the church to continue the exercise, as they were disposed. The spectacle was sublime, awful, yet joyous. The pastor stood under the pulpit, his person imposing, with high, broad forehead, his eye keen and piercing, all the features of his intellectual countenance aglow with reverence for God, and love for souls, evincing the deep emotions of his great heart, and his sense of responsibility in the solemn position he was occupying. He questioned the candidates of all ages and both sexes, on their views of God, of his law, of his government, of his sovereignty; of their depravity by nature, their personal sinfulness, their utter ruin and helplessness; of their views of Christ, of his character and works; of the

Digitized by Google

Holy Spirit; of the ground and conditions of pardon, of justification by faith, of the doctrines of election and of the saints' perseverance; of the resurrection, the final judgment, the eternal state of the righteous and the wicked. While eliciting their *views* of scriptural doctrine, he questioned them minutely in regard to their *feelings* respecting it. He abounded in such questions as these: 'Do you feel God's law to be holy, just, and good? Do you feel that it would be right for God to inflict upon you its penalty?'"

After a pastorate of forty-one years, Dr. Harris, enfeebled by the weight of his office, requested a dismission from his people. On the eighth of July, 1830, his connection with his parish was dissolved, and, agreeably to his expressed wish, his successor was installed. In 1831, he took a joyous and active part in another revival, which enriched his church with fifty new members. "During the ten following years, heavenly influences, almost without intermission, rested upon the church." He died December 25, 1842, in his eighty-third year.

He was one of the Founders of the New Hampshire Missionary and Bible Societies, and was enthusiastically interested in the cause of Foreign Missions, Ministerial Education, Temperance, and Anti-Slavery. His services were numerous, and highly prized in Ecclesiastical Councils. Many of his parishioners have been trained for the office of educators at home, or missionaries abroad. Nine or ten of these have been Congregational ministers, one of them, Rev. Abraham Burnham, D. D. of Pembroke, N. H.; another, Rev. A. W. Burnham, D. D. of Rindge, N. H. He wrote for the religious periodicals somewhat, and printed fifteen pamphlets. He accomplished great good as a talker. Few men have ever fascinated me more in familiar conversation.

Although the care of many churches was upon him, yet, like his Franklin teacher, he kept his farm in a neater and better condition than other farms in his neighborhood were kept. Like his Franklin teacher, he preached two sermons from one text on the Sabbath, proving his doctrine in the morning, and drawing inferences in the afternoon. Like his Franklin teacher, he insisted on men's *knowing* that they know the truth. To a Universalist minister he once put the question, while he fastened his piercing eye upon the young man: "Do you *know*, for a certainty, that your doctrine is true?" "No, sir," was the youth's reply, "I do not pretend to a certain knowledge of the truth of it." "Then, sir," rejoined Dr. Harris, "don't you ever preach it again, till you *know* it is true." This young clergyman, a year or two afterward, renounced Universalism, although it is not known that Dr. Harris's demand for certain knowledge was the cause of the renunciation.

Rev. Dr. Daniel Dana of Newburyport, an opponent of Emmons's theology, has written the following words in regard to Emmons's favorite pupil:

"As a preacher, Dr. Harris was esteemed among the first in New Hampshire. As a pastor, he was affectionate and beloved. The excellence of his character gave him influence with the churches around him. In a word, he was one of those good men on whom memory loves to dwell. Nor do I think I can form a better wish for New Hampshire, than that she may be blessed with many ministers possessing the piety, the simplicity, the energy, and the devotion of Dr. Harris."

Digitized by Google

## Rev. Reid Paige.

This collaborator with Dr. Harris was born in Hardwick, Mass., August 30, 1764; graduated at Dartmouth College, 1786; was ordained the first minister in Hancock, N. H., September 20, 1791. He died July 22, 1816, in the fifty-second year of his age, and the twenty-fifth year of his pastorate.

The Secretary of the New Hampshire Missionary Society, formerly a parishioner of Mr. Paige, has thus described him: "Possessing a strong, logical, well-educated, and well-balanced mind, and a spirit of earnest prayer, having a remarkable familiarity with the Scriptures, and a profound knowledge of the great doctrines of revelation, being a firm believer in the sovereignty of God, and the entire free agency of man, his preaching was with power. Well do I remember his influence on his hearers. Each sermon made them thoughtful. It was the subject of conversation among them during the intervals of public worship. The doctrine of election, though not cleared of its mystery, was yet generally accepted by them, so clearly did he prove it, and earnestly enforce it. Their belief of the doctrine was accompanied with adoring views of God, and a deep sense of dependence on his grace for salvation.

"Mr. Paige was not an eloquent preacher, in the usual meaning of the word. Near-sighted, he was wont to hold his brief notes in a small Bible directly before his eyes, generally with both hands. In uttering the extemporaneous portions of his sermons, he would turn the Bible a little aside, or place it upon the desk. When he did this, strong utterances of truth were expected, nor was the expectation vain. It could not be said that Mr. Paige was a close, constant student of *books*, for [unlike his teacher] he was wont to work five days in the week on his farm with his own hands. Saturday he passed in his study, in preparation for the Sabbath. Though not *in his study* much of the time, he was *much in study* in the field. Having the Scriptures stored in his memory, he meditated on their truths while at work on his farm, and there, no doubt, he selected his texts and arranged the plans of his sermons. Though not technically a student, he read extensively. He owned a good library of the old standard authors, and he kept in his house a good town library which had been purchased through his influence, and its volumes were mainly selected by himself.

"Mr. Paige was not only an able preacher, but he greatly excelled as a pastor. He was peculiarly attractive to children and youth. After the lapse of more than fifty years, I distinctly remember his apt and appropriate words at the meetings which he held for the young members of his flock.

"He was the minister of the whole town, which contained at the time of his death some sixteen hundred inhabitants. All were his parishioners; no other religious society having been formed in the town during his ministry of twenty-five years. Representatives from nearly all the families were regularly at worship on the Sabbath. All the pews below and above were filled with parents and children, scarcely a place where a child could sit being unoccupied. Valuable as was the ministry of Mr. Paige, it was not so fruitful in revivals as has been that of his two successors. But the revivals that blessed the town since his death are, under God, the fruit of the seed which he sowed, as well as of the labors of the men who followed him. During his ministry, one hundred and forty-eight were added to his church. During the more than six years after his decease in which the church was without a pastor, thirty-one persons were added. During the ministry of his immediate successor, from 1822 to

Digitized by Google

1850, three hundred and fourteen were added. The whole number received into the church from its organization, near the time of Mr. Paige's settlement, until 1855, is five hundred and eighty-seven. At least five or six natives of the town have entered the Congregational ministry. The late Rev. Isaac Robinson, D. D., of Stoddard, N. H., the ablest biblical scholar ever known in the State, received his theological education under Mr. Paige," who was an excellent instructor.

One of Mr. Paige's printed sermons was preached at the ordination of Dr. Robinson. He printed eight solid pamphlets. One of them was a Fast sermon, another a Thanksgiving sermon, both delivered on the same day, which was the day appointed by the governor of the State for Fasting, and by the President of the United States for Thanksgiving, April 13, 1815. Mr. Paige was distinguished not only as a clergyman, but also as a politician. "He was," says his nephew Rev. Lucius R. Paige, "one of the very few clergymen of that period who were both Orthodox and Democrats. He took much interest in politics, was often a Representative in the General Court, and died in that office."

Mr. Paige advocated Emmons's theological system with great fidelity. In the main, too, he followed the *practical* rules of his teacher. When he had finished his studies at Franklin, and had taken leave of his instructor, he was called back by Dr. Emmons, who remarked: "I have omitted one very important caution." "What is that?" asked Mr. Paige. "In all your public services," said the teacher, "remember to leave off when you have done."

### Rev. Jonathan Ward.

This colaborer with Bailey, Wines, Fowler, and Smith, was the son of Rev. Nathan Ward of Plymouth, N. H. He was born at Plymouth, August 24, 1769; was fitted for college with the late Dr. Wood of Boscawen — "studying one year and entering in advance; was graduated at Dartmouth in 1792, and was the first native of Plymouth who received a public education. He was a classmate with Rev. Jesse Appleton, D. D., late President of Bowdoin College, and of Rev. Ebenezer Porter, D. D., late of the Theological Seminary at Andover; — and I may say, possessed of an order of mind scarcely inferior to either of those gentlemen." — (Rev. Dr. Bouton in his Funeral Sermon.) He was ordained pastor of the Congregational church in Alna, Me., in 1796. Here he was one of the original trustees of that Society, which at length germinated into the Bangor Theological Seminary. He was also one of the Founders of the Maine Missionary Society. Having preached about twenty years at Alna, he removed to his native town, and supplied its pulpit eleven years. In 1829, he removed to Brentwood, N. H., and preached there three years and a half. He published four sermons, and numerous essays in the religious newspapers and other periodicals. He was one of the original members of the New Hampshire General Association. The following incidents in his history have been narrated by a surviving daughter:

"It was for many years his custom to sit up the greater part of Saturday nights, and sometimes the entire night, pleading for the influences of the Spirit to give efficacy to the labors of the Sabbath. And I well remember from early childhood, hearing him at all seasons of the night, wrestling in prayer with an earnestness that said, 'I will not let Thee go except thou bless me.' Entirely self-sacrificing, with a heart

Digitized by Google

overflowing with benevolence and love, we never went to him for counsel or sympathy, but we had evidence of his tender interest to the full extent of our need — and often, when I have mentioned some trial, or difficulty, long after I had almost forgotten it, he has written to counsel, console, or suggest some means of relief. So entirely forgetful was he of himself, of his own personal comfort, that I do not recollect of ever hearing him make a request, or express a desire for any thing but *cold water* — nor does my sister recollect of ever hearing him speak a dissatisfied word with regard to domestic arrangements. Under all circumstances it was ever an humble expression of unworthiness, or of gratitude for undeserved mercies."

"He was so interested in the spiritual welfare of his fellow-beings, and so desirous to converse on the all-important subject of religion, especially in seasons of 'revival,' that on one occasion, spending a night in North Yarmouth, Me., when there was a revival there, and being obliged to leave early in the morning, he rose very early, before the family were up, and not finding his hat where he had left it the previous evening, he threw his pocket handkerchief over his head, and went through the village conversing with all whom he found up at that early hour, on the subject that lay so near his heart."

"I think my father used to spend a great portion of his *nights* in prayer. I well remember, while I lived at home, that my sleeping chamber was near his study, and it was nothing unusual for me, waking in the night, to hear him *groaning* in prayer — and sometimes, when riding, so lost was he in heavenly communings that the tears would roll down his cheeks, and the reins would drop from his hands. He was peculiarly tender-hearted. His heart overflowed with tenderness, and he would weep always at any scene or recital of human suffering."

This persevering student died at Brentwood, February 24, 1860, aged ninety years and six months. His last conversation, as related by his daughter, was characteristic of his Hopkinsian theology.

'Several times he spoke of the Prophecies relating to the Millennium, a subject he had long been particularly interested in. He spoke also of Mohammedan persecutions, related the substance of an account he had read of some Christians, who had been put to death, mentioning the precise number, etc. — Twice during his illness he requested that the fifth chapter of the Second Corinthians should be read to him, and also the twentieth and twenty-second of Revelation. On the last, he made some remarks and explanations. On the Sabbath preceding his death he appeared to suffer much, but when asked if he was in pain, he almost invariably answered in his quiet, uncomplaining way, "Not much" — and although from that time, till a few hours previous to his death, he breathed with difficulty and groaned at every breath, yet to the question often put to him, "Do you suffer much," his patient reply was still the same, "Not much," — or, "I have some pain." A day or two before his death I said, "Dear father, I long to ease your pain." He replied with difficulty, "You must be contented." To my sister and myself weeping by his bed, he said, "I would have you be easy, and resigned to the will of God." To Mrs. G——, who said to him, near dying, "I am sorry to see you suffer so much," he answered, "The Judge of all the earth will do right." I said, "Do you think you shall be raised up again, father?" "Yes," he replied, "the Bible is very explicit." I saw he had mistaken my meaning of recovery to health, and said, 'You mean at the last great day?' "Oh, yes." — An hour or two before he expired, his breathing became easy, and he lay calm and

Digitized by Google

quiet. My sister repeated a number of texts of Scripture to him, "For me to die is gain," etc. "Can you say so, father?" "Yes." When she repeated, "Though I walk through the dark valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil," etc., he answered, "Yes," and made an effort to add something more. — After he became speechless, he still recognized the friends that were about him, and extended his hand to one and another, in token of "farewell." Having tasted a little wine, he then took his handkerchief, and with his trembling hand wiped his mouth and eyes; then closed his eyes — a moment of apparent quiet sleep — and, the angels had taken him to Abraham's bosom.'

The *antiquity* of the influence of Emmons will be noticed in various Sections of the present chapter. It is illustrated by the following record of self-forgetting, long-enduring pioneers in our once destitute regions:

Rev. Nathan Church was born in South Hadley, Mass., in 1754, graduated at Dartmouth College in 1784, ordained at Bridgton, Maine, in 1789, remained pastor of that church thirty-eight years, was a thorough student of the Bible, and an able reasoner. He retired from the ministry in 1827, and died in 1836, aged eighty-two years. He lived a missionary life among the feeble churches of his neighborhood, and the results of his labor remain sure and stable.

Rev. James Tufts, born in New Braintree, Mass., in 1764, graduated at Brown University in 1787, ordained in the yard of a private dwelling-house at Wardsborough, Vt., Nov. 4, 1795, remained sole pastor of the church until 1837, and colleague pastor until his death, August 11, 1841, at the age of seventy-seven years. His gratuitous labors, in the mountainous region around his parish, were abundant. Over rough roads, through narrow pathways in the forests, he travelled with wonderful energy, perseverance, and self-denial, as real a missionary as if he had been in a foreign land. He was noted for a vigorous mind, great skill in explaining difficult propositions, and a pleasing originality in illustrating all truths. He was a rigidly doctrinal preacher, and was forceful in pressing his clearly proved words upon the sensibilities of his hearers. He was a prudent and wise pastor. He received three hundred persons into his church, and his ministry was attended with several revivals of religion. He was devout habitually. About an hour before his death, he learned, for the first time, that he was in a state of peril; but he remained entirely calm, remarked that for a long period he had thought daily of his departure, requested his son to pray that "God's will may be done," and, after the prayer, he expired without a groan or sigh.

Rev. Pierson Thurston was a Founder of the Maine Missionary Society. He was graduated at Dartmouth College in 1787, was ordained at Somersworth, N. H., Feb. 1, 1792 (his ordination sermon being preached by Dr. Samuel Spring). He was dismissed December 2, 1812. He was installed as the first pastor of the First Congregational Church in St. Johnsbury, Vt., Oct. 25, 1815. During his ministry of two years in this place, fifty-two persons were added to the church. The whole number who had ever belonged to it before, was sixty. He died August 15, 1819, at Leominster, Mass. He was a man of tall and commanding person; "had a pleasant voice and was effective as a speaker." He was a diligent student, but his library and all his sermons were consumed with his parsonage at Somersworth. He was a circumspect, devout Christian, and although termed a "hard preacher," was highly

Digitized by Google

revered. He was subject to great depression of spirits, and at one time became nearly or quite insane.

Rev. William Riddel, a brother-in-law of Emmons, was born in Coleraine, Mass., Feb. 4, 1768, graduated at Dartmouth College in 1793, was pastor at Bristol, Maine, from 1796 until 1804, "then spent about one year as a Missionary in Western New York," afterwards preached at Townsend and Whittingham, Vt., and died Oct. 24, 1849, aged eighty-two years. He was another of the four pupils of Dr. Emmons, who were among the Founders of the Maine Missionary Society. (See Sprague's Annals, I. p. 520.)

Rev. Drury Fairbanks, born in Holliston, Mass., Oct. 13, 1772, graduated at Brown University, 1797, ordained the second Pastor of the church in Plymouth, N. H., in 1800, dismissed March 18, 1818; installed at Littleton, N. H., May 3, 1820, dismissed March 13, 1836, died in 1853, in the eighty-first year of his age. The Secretary of the New Hampshire Missionary Society writes:

"I was favored with a personal knowledge of Mr. Fairbanks for more than forty years. He had a good mind; an open, benignant countenance, a noble, commanding person; a genial spirit; was very affable, kind, generous, loving; and he exhibited, in all the relations of life, the excellences of the religion he taught. In the regions around his settlement, he performed much gratuitous missionary labor; preaching, visiting the sick, attending funerals, looking after the sheep and lambs of the Good Shepherd's flock, scattered over those moral wastes. These missionary toils, and also his labors in teaching youthful scholars in his own house were, in addition to his pastoral work, too severe for his constitution. After a faithful ministry of thirty-four years, he retired to a farm, yet remained an active, lovely, venerable servant of God."

## § 6. *The interest of Emmons's Pupils in Revivals of Religion.*

The history of his Theological School discloses more numerous and genuine religious excitements, than are noticed in the record of any similar school that preceded his in our land. He aimed to make his system of theology an awakening one. The stimulus of his doctrinal method has been indicated in the previous Sketches of his pupils. It is also represented by the following names:

### Rev. Eli Smith.

This earnest pastor was born in Belchertown, Mass., Sept. 17, 1759; graduated at Brown University in 1792, at the age of thirty-three; was ordained at Hollis, N. H., Nov. 27, 1793, and dismissed in 1831, after a pastorate of thirty-seven years. He died May 11, 1847, in the eighty-eighth year of his age.

Four, at least, of his near relatives have been employed as foreign missionaries. Rev. Mr. Blake, in his History of Mendon Association (pp. 249, 250), writes:

'Mr. Smith's ministry in Hollis was signally blessed. The first great revival among his people began in 1801, and continued over a year. It was preceded for three or four years, by an uncommon degree of religious feeling. As its fruits, one

Digitized by Google

hundred and forty-two, mostly heads of families, united with the church. This was one of the first revivals of the present century. During his pastorate, between four and five hundred were added to the church.

'He was also an early and fast friend to missions, and once left his people as a home missionary for a short time.

'His prominent features of character, as gathered from his funeral sermon, by Rev. Dr. Emerson, Professor at Andover, were an ardent temperament, and quick mental activity, which gave peculiar point and power to his extempore efforts; an invincible firmness, manifested in his boldness and distinctness in preaching the humbling truths of grace. He was a revival preacher, in the best sense of the term; plain, pungent, practical.

'His late education prevented his being a learned theologian. Yet he was a diligent student, rising usually at four o'clock in the morning, and spending much of his time in secret devotion.

'The system of Christian doctrine taught by his revered preceptor, Dr. Emmons, he embraced in all its strictness, and with all his heart, and taught with all his power.'

The Secretary of the New Hampshire Missionary Society writes,[1] that "more than forty young men in Mr. Smith's parish have been educated for the Christian ministry; fifteen, for each of the other learned professions; more than seventy-five natives of the town have finished their collegiate or professional course, and the great majority of them were directly or indirectly stimulated to their literary life by Mr. Smith. He was a great man, not great in learning, but great in mental power, moral worth, and in general influence."

### Rev. Benjamin Wood.

This fervid preacher was born in Lebanon, N. H., Sept. 15, 1772; graduated at Dartmouth College in 1793; was a theological student, first with Rev. Dr. Samuel Wood (his elder brother and Daniel Webster's teacher) at Boscawen, afterwards with Dr. Emmons. He was pastor of the Congregational church in Upton, Mass., from June 1, 1796, until April 24, 1849, when he died at the age of seventy-six years.

"During the fifty-three years of Mr. Wood's labors in Upton, eight distinct seasons of refreshing were enjoyed, which resulted in the addition of over four hundred members to the church." He was a gentleman of great kindness and vivacity, a most delightful companion, and an eminently devoted Christian. "To a clerical brother, he expressed his dying faith, 'I have been examining the doctrines which I preached, to see if any of them may be spared; but I cannot part with one. They are all precious. They are all links in a golden chain.'" — (Blake's History, p. 141.)

### Rev. Elnathan Walker.

"He was born in Taunton, Mass., Feb. 18, 1780, graduated at Brown University in 1803, ordained pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Homer, N. Y., Oct. 25, 1809, died there in 1820, aged forty years. The Cortland Repository says of Mr. Walker:

"He was a firm advocate for the doctrines of grace. He preached them plainly and cheerfully, and decidedly bore testimony in their favor on his dying bed. He was a

[1] MS. Letter of Rev. William Clark.



Digitized by Google

friend to revivals of religion by the efficacious influence of the Holy Spirit. No less than *three* general revivals were experienced in the congregation during his pastoral connection with them, and four hundred and sixty-eight members were added to the church.

"Mr. Walker's funeral was attended by more than two thousand people, assembled to pay their last tribute of respect to departed worth. Eleven of the neighboring clergymen were present. The funeral sermon was preached by Rev. Mr. [Dr.] Lansing, from Heb. 11 : 27 ; 'For he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.'"

REV. ARTEMAS DEAN.

He was born in Taunton, Mass., August 16, 1783, was graduated at Union College in 1803. He was approbated as a preacher June 6, 1811, was ordained in 1814 over a Presbyterian church in Bethlehem, N. Y., and dismissed in 1842. He died at New Windsor, N. Y., Sept. 9, 1859. As an evangelist, he was a successful laborer. In his pastorate, he enjoyed "three revivals of great power." About five hundred persons were apparently converted under his ministrations.

## § 7. *The Solid Pastors among the Franklin Pupils.*

Nearly all the students of Emmons were adorned with the name of "faithful ministers of the New Testament." They are characterized as "solid Christians," and "pastors of well wearing parts." There were some exceptions. There was one John Smith, not the exemplary Professor at Bangor, but another and very different clergyman, who has left behind him not a very distinguished name. He can be mentioned without giving particular offence to any who are indefinitely related to him. There was another pupil, a good man and an indefatigable student, but afflicted with an infirmity,—more injurious to a clergyman than to a politician, in whom it is sometimes ranked as a virtue,—of not paying his debts. There was a third, of whom his biographer says that he was too "*cordially treated*" by his parishioners. In the general, however, the Franklin pupils were methodical and circumspect, like their teacher, and are represented by the following names:

REV. HOLLOWAY FISH, born in 1762, graduated at Dartmouth College in 1790, ordained in Marlborough, N. H., Sept. 25, 1793, "died praying for his people," Sept. 25, 1824, aged sixty-two years. He was the son of Rev. Elisha Fish, of Upton, Mass., and brother of Rev. Elisha Fish, of Gilsum, N. H. During his ministry of thirty years, he admitted to his church one hundred and seventy-four persons, one hundred and twenty-nine by profession of their faith.

Digitized by Google

Rev. Nathaniel Hall was born in Sutton, Mass., April 9, 1764; graduated at Dartmouth College in 1790; pastor of the Congregational Church in Granville, N. Y., from Oct. 3, 1797 to July 31, 1820, when he died at the age of fifty-six, and after a pastorate of twenty-three years. He admitted to his church, on profession of their faith, two hundred and fifty-five persons. He was the father of Hon. Willis Hall, formerly Attorney-General of New York, and grandfather of Rev. Edwin H. Crane, missionary to the Nestorians.

Rev. Samuel Judson, born Dec. 8, 1767, in Woodbury, Conn., graduated at Yale College, 1790; was the beloved pastor of the Congregational Church in Uxbridge, Mass., from Oct. 17, 1792 until 1832. He died Nov. 11, 1832, at the age of sixty-five years, after a successful pastorate of forty years. "He gave a thousand dollars to found a scholarship for the education of pious young men."

Rev. Nathan Holman, born in Millbury, May 17, 1769; graduated with distinction at Brown University in 1797; was a successful pastor of the Congregational Church in East Attleborough, Mass., from Oct. 15, 1800 until May 22, 1821. He died Oct. 28, 1844, aged 75 years. "His iron diligence and perseverance are illustrated by the method in which he prepared himself for College. He would lay open his Latin or Greek Grammar on the wall at one side of the plot of ground where he was laboring, then would con his declensions and paradigms, while he followed the plough, the hoe, or the scythe across and back. He thus *worked* his way through the farm and the classics at the same time." — (Blake's History of Mendon Association, p. 147.)

Rev. John Fitch, born in Hopkinton, 1770, son of Rev. Elijah Fitch; graduated at Brown University in 1790; pastor at Danville, Vt., from October 30, 1793 to October 1, 1816, twenty-three years. He published several sermons. Sixty-five persons were added to his church during his ministry.

Rev. David Jewett, born at Hollis, N. H., July 16, 1773; graduated at Dartmouth College in 1801; "studied theology with his townsman, Rev. Dr. Worcester, of Salem, also with Rev. Dr. Emmons, of Franklin, and Rev. Dr. Spring, of Newburyport." He was ordained at Rockport, Mass., Oct. 30, 1805. "During the first ten years of his ministry [at Rockport], seventy were added to the number of Christ's professed followers. In the next ten years, twenty-six were added; and within ten years more, two hundred and six; and, during the last year of his ministry there, ten were received to the church: in all by him three hundred and twelve." He contended, "with Christian tenderness and an iron resolution," against the Universalism which prevailed around Cape Ann. His health failing, he retired from his pastorate in May, 1836, and died at Waltham, Mass., July 20, 1841, aged sixty-eight years. His remains were reinterred fifteen years afterwards, with appropriate and impressive solemnities, in the cemetery of his grateful parish. "It has been well said of him, that if Augustus Cæsar could boast, that though he found Rome built of brick, he left it built of marble, much more might this servant of the Lord affirm, that from a mass of spiritual rubbish, he had collected and hewn the lively stones of a spiritual edifice of fair proportions and firm foundations, 'filled with the glory of the Lord.'" — (Rev. Dr. Crowell's Sermon at the funeral of Mr. Jewett, p. 19, and Appendix, p. 32.)

Rev. Edward Whipple, born in New Braintree, Mass., 1778; graduated at Wil-

Digitized by Google

liams College in 1801; ordained at Charlton, Mass., 1804; dismissed in 1821, and installed Sept. 26, 1821, at Shrewsbury, where he died Sept. 22, 1822, aged forty-four. He followed the advice of his instructor, who preached at Mr. Whipple's ordination the noted sermon on the "Spiritual Food of Christians."

Rev. Emerson Paine, born in Foxborough, Mass., December 5, 1786; graduated at Brown University in 1813; ordained at Middleborough, Mass., Feb. 14, 1816, dismissed June 4, 1822; installed at Little Compton, Nov. 20, 1822, dismissed April 20, 1835. "He preached again, a few months, in Middleborough, until invited to labor in Halifax, where he continued to preach until his death, which occurred April 26, 1851, at the age of sixty-five years," after a ministry of thirty-five years. He published three pamphlets, and a volume of truly able sermons.

Rev. Willard Holbrook, born in Uxbridge, Mass., April 7, 1792; graduated at Brown University in 1814; after reading theology with Dr. Emmons, was advised by him to complete his studies at Andover; was ordained at Rowley, Mass., July 22, 1818; dismissed May 12, 1840; installed at Mendon [Blackstone], August 18, 1841; dismissed Feb. 19, 1850; preacher at Limebrook from March 1, 1851, until March 1, 1855; died at Rowley, Mass., Feb. 7, 1860, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. Like several other pupils of Emmons, he suffered in the pulpit from a defective elocution.

### § 8. *The Variety of Gifts and Fortunes among the Franklin Pupils.*

It is frequently imagined, that all who felt the power of the Franklin teacher, sacrificed their idiosyncracies to him. But instead of aiming to cast them all in one mould, Emmons loved to develop the constitutional peculiarities of his disciples. He chose that each bear the image and superscription enstamped on him by his Maker. The ensuing Sketches illustrate the diversity that enriched his school.

#### Rev. Nathaniel Howe.

He was born Oct. 6, 1764; was graduated at Harvard College in 1786; was a theological student first of Rev. Levi Hart, D. D. (Dr. Bellamy's son-in-law), of Preston, Conn., secondly of Dr. Emmons. He was pastor of the Congregational Church in Hopkinton, Mass., from Oct. 5, 1791, until Feb. 15, 1837, when he died, in the seventy-third year of his age, and the forty-sixth year of his pastorate. Six publications came from his pen. One of them, his Century Sermon, is thus noticed in the North American Review for November, 1816.

"It has been our lot to read more polished sermons than the present, but never one half so abounding in plainness and originality. It is a unique specimen, and beyond all price. That it should have been delivered is remarkable—that it should have been printed, still more so; particularly as it was printed by request, and dedicated to the parish, with affectionate wishes for their peace, prosperity, and eternal happiness. The text taken for the motto in the title-page, which is not that of the discourse, is admirably chosen. We shall make some extracts, but almost every page of it will reward perusal."

Digitized by Google

Mr. Howe was a man of genial temper, sparkling wit, and downright honesty. His genius often flashed forth in the pulpit, and startled his auditors. Dr. Elam Smalley affirms (see Sprague's Annals, II. pp. 308, 309) that some passages in Mr. Howe's sermons "would have done no discredit to a Mason or a Bellamy." He did not, as Emmons did, abstain from witticisms in the pulpit. He breathed pleasantry, and lost the power of distinguishing between a humorous and a grave remark. As he was a near neighbor of Emmons, he often enlivened the Franklin parsonage.

Rev. Calvin Chadduck.—The grandfather of this clergyman (named Chadwick) was early left an orphan, and an heir to an immense estate in Liverpool, England. In his boyhood he was impressed on board a man-of-war, and for ten years afterward was scarcely ever on land. At length he made a narrow escape to the shore of Virginia. The father of Rev. Calvin Chadduck was a brave captain in our revolutionary army. Several brothers of the clergyman served in the war. The clergyman himself was born at Brookfield, Mass., in 1765; graduated at Dartmouth College in 1791; was ordained Oct. 10, 1793, at Rochester, Mass., where he erected an academy, and for several years was noted as a teacher. In 1806 he removed to Hanover, Mass., and after twelve years of pastoral service in that town, he emigrated to Charleston, Va., where he was resettled in the ministry, and died in 1822, aged fifty-seven years. He was a man of zeal and energy; of a sensitive and confiding nature; and was admired as an impressive and powerful speaker.

Rev. Levi Nelson.—He was born in Milford, Mass., Aug. 8, 1779; was a member of Brown University and of Williams College, but forced by precarious health to abridge his collegiate course. In 1803 he was appointed by the Massachusetts Missionary Society to labor in the northern part of Oneida and Lewis counties, N. Y., and in 1804, Dec. 5, he was ordained pastor of the Congregational Church in Lisbon, Conn., where he died Dec. 17, 1855, in the seventy-seventh year of his age, and the fifty-second year of his ministry. "He preached five thousand and one hundred different sermons." "He bequeathed one thousand dollars to his parish, provided they did not settle as his successor a man embracing what was called the New Haven theology."—(Allen's Biographical Dictionary.) He printed six pamphlets at least, and numerous essays in religious periodicals, many of them in opposition to the New Haven school.

Rev. Roswell Randall Swan.—He was born of opulent parents in Stonington, Conn., June 16, 1778, was a graduate of Yale College in the class of 1802, and he "ranked well with Hon. Isaac C. Bates, Jeremiah Evarts, President Daniel Haskell, Professor John Hough, Judge Samuel Hubbard, President William Maxwell, Dr. Junius Smith, Governor G. Tomlinson, and Professor S. S. Woodhull." From March until August, 1804, he studied theology with peculiar earnestness at Franklin; but was driven from his books by a severe and dangerous disease. From October, 1804, until February, 1805, he continued his studies with Rev. Dr. Perkins of West Hartford. He was ordained January 14, 1807, at Norwalk, Conn., was the pastor of Roger Minot Sherman for a time, and of Governor Clark Bissell. Greatly lamented, he died March 22, 1818, aged forty years. During the twelve years of his pastorate he admitted to his church two hundred and sixty-one persons; an uncommonly large number of them from among the youth of the town. He was a man of eminent piety, and bore a striking resemblance to David Brainerd. In one of the last letters ever written by Dr. McEwen of New London, he says: "Mr. Swan was an intimate



Digitized by Google

companion of mine. He was resolute and devout; a warm-hearted, faithful minister; a man of extensive knowledge and strong purposes."

Rev. Nathaniel Rawson, born February 26, 1780, was a descendant of the well-known Secretary Rawson. He was ordained pastor at Hardwick, Vt., February 13, 1811, dismissed May 30, 1817; "preached until 1834, as a missionary in Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, and Canada." He had various innocent peculiarities. He had often expressed a wish to die without any premonition. "While raking hay on his farm in Hampton, Conn., July, 1845, he was instantly killed by lightning, and was *buried* in less than twenty-four hours from the time he entered his field in health." His age was sixty-five years.

Rev. Bela Kellogg, born at Amherst, Mass., in 1780; graduated at Williams College in 1800; approbated as a preacher in 1808; settled at Brookfield, Conn., in 1813, at East Avon, Conn., in 1819; died in 1831, aged 51 years. He was distinguished by his devout life, and by the patience with which he bore some peculiar afflictions.

Rev. Jonathan Longley, born in Boylston, Mass., 1790, a member of Harvard College in 1811, approbated as a preacher in 1819, died in Northbridge, Mass., January 20, 1850, aged sixty years. He was remarkable for the tenacity of his memory, and his ability to quote proof-texts, and other passages of the Bible, naming the chapter and verse where the exact words are found.

Rev. Moses Partridge was born in Bellingham, Mass., 1788; graduated at Brown University in 1814; labored about ten years in the service of the Massachusetts Missionary Society, was ordained at Monument Point, Plymouth; and on the 25th of September, 1824, soon after his ordination, he died at the age of thirty-six years. He was a representative of those pupils of Emmons, who, without any peculiar metaphysical acumen, or scholarly acquisitions, maintained a religious character eminently pure, sincere, simple, modest, hearty.

Hon. Christopher Webb. This gentleman was born in Weymouth, Mass., July 11, 1780, and graduated at Brown University in 1803. He practised law in his native town; was often sent Representative from Weymouth to the Legislature; was sent several times to the Massachusetts Senate; was County Commissioner, President of the Palestine Missionary Society, and a highly honorable man in both church and state. His doubts with regard to his religious character, made him shrink from entering the clerical profession. He remained about thirty years in political life. He died in Baltimore, Md., Feb. 12, 1848, in the sixty-eighth year of his age.

### § 9. *Men of Mark among the Franklin Pupils.*

Forty-one of the deceased pupils of Dr. Emmons are noticed in the Biographical Dictionaries of eminent men. In what other school have one half of the *stelligeri* attained so good a name? The preceding Sketches illustrate the fact, that men who were to lay the foundations for schools of learning, and for other beneficent institutions repaired to Emmons as their magnetic

Digitized by Google

instructor. He did not impart to them their originality of mind. They had it before they resorted to him. But he quickened their inventive genius. His sympathy with their intellectual and moral wants attracted them to him. When Professor Cleaveland; the distinguished mineralogist and chemist, was hesitating whether or not to enter the clerical office, his pastor, Dr. Elijah Parish, entreated him to sit, for a few months, under the instruction of Dr. Emmons, as the man best fitted to influence a mind so philosophical and truth-loving. While the youthful naturalist was teaching a school at York, he received from Dr. Parish the following words of advice in a letter dated March 22, 1801.[1]

"I hope you are forming all your plans with the idea of spending the summer with Dr. Emmons. Settle this sacred link in the chain of your calculations. After answering the principal object had in view for the school, let Dr. Emmons be the next object. Let a few months of your immortal existence be consecrated as the still Sabbath of your life. There pause ponder, reason, judge, determine. It will give a complexion to your future existence. It may, I hope will, be the basis of greater comfort, energy, and usefulness, whether it shall alter your professional object or not."

The sketches already given develop the individuality of mind which marked the Franklin pupils. There is a living clergyman who is still characterized by lines of thought and feeling borrowed from no one, and who has often "joined the train of pilgrims, seeking wisdom at the lips of the sage of Franklin." This is the

### Rev. Thomas Williams.

He was born in Pomfret, Conn., November 5, 1779; was graduated at Yale College in 1800; after having been a teacher in Boston, was approbated as a minister in 1804; became a missionary in Delaware County, N. Y., then a pastor at Providence, R. I., next at Foxborough, Mass., and afterward at Attleborough, Mass. He has performed a great amount of missionary labor among the feeble churches of Rhode Island. He was one of the originators of the Evangelical Consociation of that State. He was its first Scribe, and he "drafted its Articles of Faith." As early as 1809, he made efforts "to bring the subject of Foreign Missions before the General Association of Connecticut," and to establish a Magazine for diffusing a missionary spirit among the churches. He has contributed many Articles for the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine, the Panoplist, and other periodicals. He has published more

[1] See Dr. Leonard Woods's Address on the Life and Character of Parker Cleaveland, LL. D., p. 19.

Digitized by Google

than fifty sermons, chiefly in the pamphlet form. He edited two volumes of Emmons's sermons. I have heard him preach discourses which for originality of argument; richness and saliency of imagination; exuberance of feeling; energy, boldness, fervor of style; vehement, forceful, and commanding elocution, have been seldom surpassed. His bright thoughts, apt words, spirited and solemn tones, have been sometimes overpowering. His fertility of anecdote, his sprightliness of wit, his previous intimacy with Dr. Nathan Strong and other old divines, his deep sympathy with Edwardean doctrines, and his varied intelligence, made him a favorite at the Franklin parsonage. He was selected by Dr. Emmons, twenty-five years before the Doctor's death, to preach his funeral sermon.

There is another gentleman, who was not so eminent for a sparkling genius, as for a Christian consistency in high civil offices, and whose life uncovers various hidden branches of the influence that flowed, more or less freely, from Emmons and Spring.

### Hon. Thomas W. Thompson.

This Hopkinsian statesman was born in Boston, Mass., March 15, 1766, and was graduated at Harvard College in 1786. He was a classmate of Hon. Alden Bradford, Hon. John Lowell, Hon. C. G. Champlin, Judge Isaac Parker, and Rev. Dr. William Harris. He left Harvard with the valedictory honors. He was tutor in the college from 1789 until 1791. His father, having removed from Boston to Newburyport, became interested in Samuel Spring, and was a firm disciple of Emmons. This was one reason for young Thompson's repairing to Franklin for theological study. But while sitting at the feet of the teacher whom he revered, he felt impelled by a patriotic impulse to join the forces called out for suppressing "Shay's Rebellion," and was appointed aid to General Lincoln, the commander of those forces.

Deeming himself better fitted for the legal than the clerical profession, he studied law with his townsman, Judge Theophilus Parsons of Newburyport. He commenced his legal practice in that part of Salisbury which is now included in Franklin, N. H. Here he had an extensive practice. In politics he was, like Emmons, a decided Federalist. He was often sent as Representative from Salisbury to the New Hampshire Legislature, was speaker of the House in 1813 and 1814; was Representative in the U. S. Congress in 1805–1807; was elected State Treasurer in 1810, when he removed to Concord, N. H.; was Senator in the U. S. Congress in 1814–1817.

He was one of the most efficient friends of Dartmouth College. Elected to its Board of Trustees in 1801, he remained an energetic member of the Board for twenty years. During this period, that well-known litigation occurred which determined the fate not only of Dartmouth, but of other New England Colleges. Mr. Thompson was one of the foremost men in conducting this momentous controversy. He had accumulated, in his legal profession, an estate of about fifty thousand dollars; but, with a Hopkinsian disinterestedness, he put all his property at hazard in defence of his adopted college. The successful issue of that controversy, is, in no small degree, attributable to his wisdom.

Digitized by Google

Opposite to his office in Salisbury, was the farm of Judge Ebenezer Webster. Mr. Thompson and Judge Webster were the "next door neighbors" for nineteen years. For a long time, they were almost the *only* near neighbors. They were drawn into peculiar intimacy by their kindred pursuits in life. The attention of Mr. Thompson was soon attracted to the promising talents of Daniel Webster, the son of the Judge, and a boy nine years old when Mr. Thompson first knew him. "*The advice and entreaty of Mr. Thompson were very efficient in persuading Judge Webster to let Daniel have a collegiate education.*" In August, 1801, Daniel was graduated at Dartmouth. He entered at once, the law office of Mr. Thompson, and remained there till, in the words of Mr. March, "he felt it necessary to go somewhere and do something to earn a little money."—(Webster's Works, Vol. I. p. xxvii.) In September, 1802, having taught the Fryeburg Academy, he resumed his studies with Mr. Thompson. He continued them until March 1804, eighteen months. He "found in his instructor's family the habits of a Christian gentleman, strictly religious in practice, orthodox in sentiment, refined and courteous in manners. *The influence thus bearing upon him, was the greater from the seclusion of the spot where they lived.* This influence marked his character through life."

The eminent biographer of Mr. Webster has criticized Mr. Thompson for directing the legal studies of his pupils "on the principle of the hardest book first," and for breaking his young men into their profession through the wall of Coke's Littleton.—(Webster's Works, Vol. I. p. xxxviii.) But Mr. Thompson simply adhered to the old methods of legal discipline. Like his theological instructor, he did not easily turn from the trodden paths. He and Webster had lived in a comparative wilderness. In many a cold winter, he had been compelled to rely on Indian snow-shoes for his means of locomotion from one house to another. At the adjournment of a court in one county, he often mounted his horse, rode during the entire night to the shire town of another county, and stood up on the next morning to plead a new cause before a new Court. He was thus inured to hard work, and did not fear the hard regimen of his fathers. Loving the vigorous discipline, he maintained also the personal dignity of the old school. He was eminent for his urbane and courtly manners, his polished and gentlemanly conversation. "He was among the last to discard the long silk stockings and silver shoe buckles which rendered his handsome person quite imposing." Says a Professor in one of our colleges: "He was one of the first men whom I remember, and one of the last whom I can forget."

With all his culture he combined the strict religious discipline of the fathers. While a member of Congress, he was active in maintaining at his own lodgings a Congressional prayer-meeting. While at his home, he was a faithful deacon of the church, superintendent of the Sabbath school, a munificent patron of the various benevolent societies. The Temperance Reform had not commenced at the time of his decease, but as early as 1816, ten years before the Total Abstinence Societies were formed, he resisted the fashion of his time; and, having dispensed with them himself, he removed all wines and spirits from his table and sideboard.

He died at Concord, N. H., October 21, 1821, in the fifty-sixth year of his age, leaving generous bequests to the charitable objects of the day, and a good name which is better than all his riches.

Digitized by Google

### § 10. *The Age of the Franklin Pupils.*

Forty-one of these athletic men attained ages amounting, in the aggregate, to three thousand and forty-seven years. One of the pupils died at ninety-one; another at ninety; one at eighty-eight; another at eighty-seven; one at eighty-five, two others at eighty-two, another at eighty-one, and four others at eighty. Twenty-one of them passed or reached the age of seventy-five.

Thirty-five of these strong men were ministers of the gospel fifteen hundred and eighty-six years in the aggregate; one of them was a minister sixty-four years; one, sixty-three; one, fifty-four; and four, fifty-three years, each.[1] In these days of physical degeneracy, when, in despite of their costly European and Western tours, our clergymen are often deemed too frail for the pulpit at the age of threescore, it is interesting to read of men who persevered in one place without an annual vacation, for a longer period than the majority of ministers now serve in successive pastorates during their entire life. The following is an illustrative record:

Rev. Caleb Blake was born at Wrentham, Mass., in 1762; was a graduate of Harvard College in the class of President Webber, 1784; was a Congregational pastor at Westford, Mass., *forty-five years*, and died May 11, 1847, aged eighty-five.

While a large proportion of the Franklin pupils were men of brawny sinews and of stalwart frames, fitted to endure hardness as good soldiers, there were some less robust, and four who died in early life. These were the following:

Phineas Taft, born August 11, 1762, a promising son of Rev. Moses Taft, of Braintree (now Randolph); graduated at Harvard College in 1789; died in 1798, aged thirty-six years. He died before his ordination.

[1] Of these aged *ministers*, all of them did not remain *pastors* for so long a time, thus:

Rev. John Simpkins, born in Boston, 1763, a son of Deacon John Simpkins, was graduated at Harvard College, in 1786, a classmate, as well as townsman, of Hon. Thomas W. Thompson, named on pp. 260–1. He was "a good scholar and divine." After a faithful pastorate at Brewster, Mass., he was compelled by feeble health to return to his native city, where he died February, 28, 1843, aged seventy-five years.

Rev. Luke Wood, an early parishioner of Rev. Charles Backus of Somers, Conn., after having served as a pastor in Waterbury and Westford, Conn., returned to Somers, and died there in 1851, aged seventy-four years.

Digitized by Google

Rev. Ariel Parish, born in Lebanon, Conn., 1764; graduated at Dartmouth College in 1788; ordained at Manchester, Mass., 1792; died in 1794, aged thirty years.

Nathaniel Ogden, born in Fairton, Cumberland Co., N. J., 1768; graduated at the University of Pennsylvania, 1793; after completing his theological studies with Dr. Emmons, supplied a vacant pulpit in Taunton, Mass., where stands his monument, having the following inscription:

"In memory of *Mr. Nathaniel Ogden, A. B.*, of Fairfield, N. J., Preacher of the Gospel, who died July 11, 1796, aged 28. He had preached on seven Lord's days, when our high expectations of his future usefulness were suddenly blasted."

Rev. Sherman Johnson, born in Southboro', August 18, 1776; graduated at Yale College, 1802; ordained in Milford, Conn., 1804, where he died in 1806, aged thirty years.

### § 11. *The Prolonged Influence of Emmons through his Pupils.*

The preceding record is significant of the protracted influence which Emmons exerted over the land. Ninety-eight years have elapsed since he became a teacher of a school, though not more than eighty-three years since he became an instructor of candidates for the pulpit. If the eldest of these theological students were now living, he would be in the hundred and eighth year of his age, and yet seven of these students remain in the church on earth. Perhaps no theological instructor in the land has come so near as Emmons, to spreading out his pupils through an entire century. He remained so long with us, that we forget how early he began to work for us, and for how long a period he has been a "power in the land." Rev. Josiah Read was born at Uxbridge, Mass., July 23, 1753, was graduated at Brown University in 1775, and was one of Emmons's "promising young men." Rev. Enoch Pond was born in Wrentham, Mass., April 27, 1756, was graduated at Brown University in 1777; and, having served one year in the Revolutionary war, and one year as a teacher of music in Boston (he was an accomplished musician), he resorted to Emmons as a theological guide. He remained the pastor at Ashford, Ct., from 1789 until his death, August 6, 1807. "He fitted many scholars for the University, and some for the Gospel ministry." These are the two *eldest* of the Franklin pupils.[1]

And where are the *youngest?* Two of them are Rev. David

[1] Rev. Thomas Moore was a pupil of Dr. Emmons, and some think that Mr. Moore was the first pastor of the church at Wiscasset, Me., and the oldest of the

Digitized by Google

Brigham and Rev. Sewall Harding, both among the Founders of the Congregational Board of Publication, — a Board which owes its origin entirely to the pupils of Emmons, and which now publishes his collected works, and those of his friends, Bellamy, Hopkins, and the younger Edwards.

Mr. Brigham was born at Westborough, Mass., Sept. 3, 1794; was graduated at Union College in 1818; was pastor of the Congregational Church in East Randolph, from Dec. 29, 1819, until Nov. 15, 1836; of the Congregational Church in Framingham from Dec. 29, 1836, until May 14, 1844; of the Congregational Church in Bridgewater from April 23, 1845, until Jan. 1, 1859. Several revivals of religion have attended his labors.

Mr. Harding was born in West Medway, Mass., March 20,

Franklin school. But the pastor at Wiscasset was graduated at Harvard in 1769, and ordained at Wiscasset in 1773, the year of Emmons's ordination at Franklin.

Among the less ancient of the deceased pupils who are not elsewhere mentioned in the Memoir, are —

Rev. Elias Dudley, born in Saybrook, Conn., Aug. 12, 1761; graduated at Dartmouth College in 1788; ordained at Oxford, Mass., April 13, 1791; dismissed in feeble health March 6, 1799; died Jan. 25, 1808; a very devoted Christian.

Rev. Royal Tyler, born in Uxbridge, Mass., May, 1762; graduated at Dartmouth College in 1788; pastor at Coventry, Conn., from 1792 to 1818; at Salem, Conn., from 1818 to 1822; died in April, 1826, aged sixty-four years.

Rev. John Morse, born in Medway, Mass., November 20, 1763; graduated at Brown University in 1791; was ordained over a Congregational Church at Green River, N. Y., where he remained twenty-three years. He was afterwards for twelve years pastor of the Presbyterian church in Otsego, N. Y., and died Jan. 3, 1844, "aged eighty years, *more than fifty* of which he spent in the ministry."

Rev. Josiah Holbrook, born in Wrentham, Jan. 19, 1765; graduated at Brown University, 1788; spent his life in South Carolina.

Rev. John Fitch, born in Hopkinton, Mass., in 1770, the eldest son of Rev. Elijah Fitch, pastor at Hopkinton; graduated at Brown University in 1790; ordained the first pastor of Danville, Vt., Oct. 30, 1793, "in a grove of maples, at the base of a circular valley;" dismissed Oct. 1, 1816; died Dec. 18, 1827.

Rev. Joseph Cheney, born in Holden, Mass., August 16, 1775; graduated at Brown University, 1801; labored as a pastor from 1807 to 1817, at Milton, Vt.; from 1819 to 1823 at Salisbury, Vt.; died June 6, 1833, in the twentieth year of his active ministry.

Rev. Gaius Conant, born in Bridgewater, Mass., Sept. 6, 1776; graduated at Brown University in 1800; labored as a pastor from Feb. 17, 1808, until May, 1830, at Paxton, Mass., and from April 24, 1834, until April, 1841, at Plymouth, Mass.

Other deceased pupils of Emmons were Timothy Clark (pastor at Greenfield, N. H.), Oliver Ayers, Gordon Johnson, Truman Baldwin, Daniel Farrington, Samuel Brown, Nathan Waldo, William Warren, George Hall (a native of East Haddam), Abel Farley, Elias Fisher (pastor forty-three years at Lempster, N. H.), Mr. —— Spalding.

Digitized by Google

1793; was graduated at Union College in 1818; was pastor of the Orthodox Congregational Church in Waltham, Mass., from Jan. 17, 1821, until Nov., 1837, when he became pastor over the first church in his native town. Here he remained thirteen years, when he was called to the Secretaryship of the Congregational Board of Publication, an office which he still retains. He has given one son to the Christian ministry, and two daughters to the cause of Foreign Missions. One of these daughters is the truly heroic wife of Rev. Augustus Walker, missionary at Diarbekir, Western Asia; the other was the wife of Rev. Mr. Williams, missionary at Mosul, Turkey, but she fell asleep soon after her arrival at the scene of her anticipated labors.

The other pupils of Emmons who yet live and have not been already named are—

Rev. David Holman, a native of Sutton, Mass., a graduate of Brown University in 1803. He was ordained in Douglas, Mass., Oct. 19, 1808; dismissed Aug. 17, 1842, after a pastorate of thirty-four years; recalled to his old pulpit after the lapse of six years. When he was ordained, his church consisted of twenty-seven members. During his pastorate he admitted two hundred and twenty-six members, the fruit of seven revivals of religion.

Rev. John Burt Wight, born May 7, 1790; was the son of Rev. Henry Wight, D. D., of Bristol, R. I. He was graduated with valedictory honors at Brown University in 1808, and was pastor at Wayland, Mass., from Jan. 25, 1815, until May, 1835, afterwards at Castine, Me., Milford and Amherst, N. H., and North Dennis, Mass.

Rev. Abel Manning, born in Sterling, Mass., 1788; was graduated at Brown University in 1817, and has performed missionary labors in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island.

Rev. William Tyler was born in Attleborough, Mass., Jan. 7, 1789; was graduated at Brown University in 1809; was pastor of the Second Church in Weymouth, Mass., from Feb. 24, 1819, until Oct. 17, 1831; of the Congregational Church in South Hadley Falls, from Aug. 10, 1832 until 1839; now resides in Pawtucket, Mass.

Rev. Zolva Whitmore, a native of East Haddam, Conn.; a graduate of Union College, in the class of 1818; a pastor at North Guilford, Conn., from Sept. 5, 1821 until August, 1846; then preacher at Heath, afterwards pastor at Becket, Mass.



Digitized by Google

# CHAPTER XIV.

## THE PUBLICATIONS OF EMMONS.

"As a biblical scholar, sermonizer, and profound logical reasoner, he had few, if any, superiors; yet as a successful preacher to win souls and gather them into the fold of Christ, he was no more to be compared with such men as Nevins, Patterson, and Nettleton, than was Franklin's angler, exulting over '*one glorious nibble*,' to be compared with the fishermen of Galilee, who, in obedience to their Lord, cast their net on the right side of the ship, and drew it to land full of great fishes, '*an hundred and fifty and three*.'"

THESE are the words of Rev. E. N. Sawtelle, D. D.,[1] the Chaplain to British and American Seamen at Havre, France, an early and beloved pupil of Dr. Isaac Anderson, and of the Tennessean School, already described.[2] If the words were accurate, they would not disprove the great influence of Dr. Emmons; for, besides being the teacher of ninety or a hundred ministers, he has also for seventy-seven years been working through the press on the minds of men. He started early, in his career of authorship; and he thus exerted a formative influence on our churches, at a time when books were like "angels' visits," and when sermons were read by élect minds as religious novels are devoured at present. His influence on the cause of missions, for example, has been often measured by the amount of time which he spent in public meetings. A more accurate measure would be, the amount of time which he spent in eliminating the principles on which the work of missions must depend.

The first printed notice which we have ever seen concerning him is the following paragraph in the Century Sermon of Mr. Bean, of Wrentham, published in 1774: "After the dismission of Mr. Barnum, that [Second] Parish was destitute about five years; when to their great joy, we trust, the vacancy was sup-

[1] In his "Treasured Moments," p. 13.

[2] See pp. 198, above.



Digitized by Google

plied with their present worthy pastor, the Rev. Nathanael Emmons."[1] The second printed notice which we find of him, alludes also to his happy pastoral relations. Rev. Jason Haven, of the First [and the parent] Church in Dedham, published in 1796 his Half-Century Sermon, and there speaking of the Franklin Church, names Mr. Emmons as "the beloved pastor of that flock."[2]

Among the earliest unpublished notices of Dr. Emmons, is a characteristic one from President Stiles, written in his Diary as early as 1787:

"The New Divinity gentlemen perceive some of the pillars are removed; President Edwards has been dead twenty-nine years, or a generation; Dr. Bellamy is broken down, both body and mind, with a paralytic shock, and can dictate and domineer no more; Mr. Hopkins still continues, but past his force, having been somewhat affected by a fit and nervous debilitation; Mr. West is declining in health, and besides, was never felt so strong rods as the others. It has been the *ton* to direct students in Divinity, these thirty years past, to read the Bible, President Edwards, Dr. Bellamy, and Mr. Hopkins's writings; — and this was a pretty good sufficiency of reading. But now the younger class, but yet in full vigor, suppose they see further than these oracles, and are disposed to become oracles themselves, and wish to write theology and have their own books come into vogue. The very New Divinity gentlemen say, they perceive a disposition among several of their brethren to struggle for preëminence; — particularly Dr. Edwards, Mr. Trumbull, Mr. Smalley, Mr. Judson, Mr. Spring, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Strong, of Hartford, Mr. Dwight, Mr. Emmons, and others. They all want to be Luthers. But they will none of them be equal to those strong reasoners, President Edwards and Mr. Hopkins."

"President Edwards's valuable writings in another generation will pass into as transient notice, perhaps, as scarce above oblivion, as Willard, or Twiss, or Norton; and when posterity comes across them in the rubbish of libraries, the rare characters who may read and be pleased with them, will be looked upon as singular and whimsical, as in these days are admirers of Suarez, Aquinas, or Dionysius Areopagita."[3]

In the same year, 1787, Dr. Burton of Thetford highly extolled Dr. Emmons as "a gentleman of great ingenuity;" and

[1] Pages 22, 23. [2] Page 25.
[3] Memoir of Dr. Hopkins, pp. 234, 235.

Digitized by Google

as early as August 10, 1790, he remarked in an epistle to Dr. Levi Hart: "In one of your letters, you speak very favorably of Mr. Emmons, and indeed there is scarcely any person I more wish to see and converse with, from what I have heard respecting him and seen of his writings." The writings of Dr. Emmons, which were published before this date, were the first six in the following catalogue:

He printed in 1783, his effective Sermon against Universalism; in 1786, his Sermon at the Installation of Rev. Caleb Alexander, and also his Sermon at the Installation of (the Revolutionary Chaplain) Rev. David Avery; in 1787, his celebrated Discourse on the Dignity of Man; in 1789, his elaborate Sermon at the Ordination of Rev. John Robinson, and also his Discourse at the Ordination of Rev. Dr. Walter Harris.

In 1790, 1792 and 1793, he published three Sermons preached to the Society for the Reformation of Morals; in 1791, a Sermon at the Ordination of Rev. Elias Dudley; in 1793, a Sermon at the Ordination of Rev. Calvin Chaddock, and one at the Ordination of Rev. Eli Smith; also in 1793, a Dissertation on the Scriptural Qualifications for admission to the Christian Sacraments, in answer to Dr. Hemmenway; in 1794, a Sermon on the Mode and Subjects of Baptism; in 1795, a Candid Reply to to Dr. Hemmenway's Remarks on his Dissertation on the Scriptural Qualifications, etc.; also two Sermons, one at the funeral of Rev. Elisha Fish, the other at the Ordination of Rev. James Tufts; in 1796, a Thanksgiving Sermon; in 1797, a Sermon at the Ordination of Rev. (Prof.) John Smith; in 1798, an Essay on Miracles, in the "Mendon Evidences of Revealed Religion," also a Fast Sermon and an Election Sermon; also, in 1799, a Fast Sermon.

He published in 1800, a Sermon on Washington, also a Sermon before the Massachusetts Missionary Society, and also a Sermon at the funeral of Mrs. Sanford, wife of his friend, Rev. David Sanford, and a Thanksgiving Sermon; in 1801, a Fast Sermon, and a Funeral Sermon; in 1802, a Fast Sermon, and a Fourth of July Sermon, and also a Funeral Sermon; in 1803, a Fast Sermon, and a Sermon at the Ordination of Rev. Joseph Emerson; in 1804, two Funeral Sermons, and a Sermon at the Ordination of Rev. Edward Whipple, and also a Sermon before the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers, and a Thanksgiving Sermon; in 1805, a Sermon at the Ordination of Rev. Dr. Stephen Chapin, and a Sermon at the funeral of the wife of Rev. Elisha Fisk, and also a Sermon on the death of Deacon Peter Whiting; in 1806, a Sermon on Sacred Music, and also a Sermon on the death of Hon. Jabez Fisher; in 1808, a Sermon at the Ordination of Rev. Gaius Conant, and also a Funeral Sermon; in 1809, a Sermon, entitled, The Giver more blessed than the Receiver, (which was reviewed in the Panoplist).

He published in 1810, a Sermon (which when he delivered, he was overcome with emotion) at the funeral of Rev. David Sanford; in 1811, a Sermon at the funeral of the wife of Rev. John Wilder; in 1813, a Sermon at the funeral of Rev. Timothy Dickinson, and an elaborate Sermon before the Mendon Association, and also a Thanksgiving Sermon; in 1814, a Funeral Sermon; in 1815, a Sermon at the fune-

Digitized by Google

ral of Rev. John Cleavland, and a Thanksgiving Sermon, and also a Sermon at the Installation of Rev. Holland Weeks; in 1816, a Funeral Sermon, and also a Sermon at the Installation of Rev. Thomas Williams; in 1817, a Sermon before the Norfolk Education Society; in 1820, a Sermon at the close of the Second Century from the landing at Plymouth; in 1821, a Sermon at the Ordination of Rev. Zolva Whitmore, and also a Sermon (preached in the Yale College Chapel) on the Foreknowledge of God; in 1824, a Sermon at the Installation of Rev. Thomas Williams; in 1826, a Sermon (the last of his Discourses before Ecclesiastical Councils) at the Installation of Rev. Dr. Calvin Park, and also his Discourse, entitled, "The Platform of Ecclesiastical Government established by Jesus Christ;" in 1836, a Sermon in the National Preacher, on Reconciliation with God.

Among his contributions to Periodicals are the following:

On Praying for Perfection, New York Theological Magazine, Vol. I. 254.

*In the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine.*

VOL. I. PAGE.

State of the Soul after Death, 99
Duty of a Church to censure its Members for Heresy, 144

VOL. II.

On Casting Lots, 303

VOL. III.

Reasons for being a Calvinist, 212
Disquisition on Romans iv. 19, 446

VOL. V.

Thoughts on Romans ix. 3, 215
Review of Dr. Reed's Sermon, 452

*In the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine.*

VOL. III.

Knowledge of God, 81
Human Depravity, 121
Guilt of Sinners, 127
Salvation by Grace, 174
Appointed Weeks of Harvest, 300
Fellowship between God and his People, 374
God governs Human Conduct, 379
Preparation for the Sacrament, 409
Importance of Systematical Divinity, 454
Confidence in God, 460

VOL. IV.

Middle-aged most desirous of Life, 7
Terrors of the Lord, 55
Piety of Primitive Christians, 81
Conditional Declarations of God, 220
Essay on Self-Examination, 248
Returning Sinner assaulted, 302
Blessedness of God, 365
Agency of God, 451

VOL. V.

Happiness a Motive to Repentance, 17
Decrees of God, 57
Patience of God, 131
Spirit and Knowledge of Christians, 172
Self-existence of Christ, 292
Punishment of Sinners, 297
Necessity of Atonement, 331
Assurance of Hope, 372
Reference to Eternity, 378
Foreknowledge of God, 411
Influence of Moral Depravity, 417
Reward bestowed on Sinners, 450

VOL. VI.

Goodness of God, 91
Indwelling of the Holy Spirit, 131
Divine Government of the World, 172
Nature proves the Goodness of God, 241
Faithfulness of God, 291
Doctrine of Election, 321
Christian Edification, 454

*In the Utica Christian Magazine.*

VOL. II.

On the Vindictive Justice of God, 348
Peace the Foundation of National Prosperity, 260
Motives to Repentance, 301

VOL. III.

Dissertation on Romans ix. 19, 39

*Utica Christian Repository.*

VOL. IV.

Design of giving the Law, 358
Unregenerate doings, Reply to Smalley, 181

VOL. V.

On God's Government of the World, 265
Sinners cannot serve a holy God, 174
Sinners bad as they can be, under present circumstances, 50
Sinners unwilling to see God as he is, 233



Digitized by Google

*Hopkinsian Magazine.*

VOL. I.

Purpose of God to display his Grace, 390

VOL. II.

Superiority of Men to Animals, 127
Certain Knowledge of Truth, 204
On Vindictive Justice, 247
Sermon on Modern Prayer of Faith, 393
Present Evils demonstrate future Punishment, 399

VOL. III.

Gross Ignorance incompatible with Piety, 145
Future Unity of Zion's Watchmen, 169
On Fear of God, 193
On Intemperance, 248

VOL. IV.

Cause of God, 17
God knows what is best to do with Creatures, 97
God's Supremacy, 129
God does not abuse Sinners in his Word, 193
A sight of God tends to transform Men, 241
Way to Heaven opposed by Sinners, 257
Cain no reason to complain, 340
Giving up Hopes, — painful, 353
Heavy-laden Sinners, 384
Nature of Atonement, 432
Danger of Worldly-mindedness, 481
Good men love to obey God, 545

*Christian Magazine.*

VOL. I.

The Everlasting Gospel, 1
Saints delight to know what the Bible contains, 33
The Gospel its own witness to those who embrace it, 53
The influence of true Religion, 65
A prayer for the increase of Faith, 115
Sinners have no reason to complain of God, 129
God displeased with inconsistent Professors, 139
The nature of the Will, 147
Self-denial of Christ, 176
Condemnation of false Teachers, 184
The Bible easily understood, 193
Merciful Purpose of God, 209
Angels pleased with the work of Redemption, 225
Peaceful effects of Confidence in God, 257
Godliness, 353
Happy Influence of Holy Fears, 356

VOL II.

The Unreasonableness of worldly Anxiety, 9
Decrees of God, 33
The Gospel of God glorious, 54
The God of Abraham the Father of Christ, 65
Peter's Love to Christ, 97
The Sealing Influence of the Holy Spirit promised to Believers, 129
The least degree of Grace constitutes a real Saint, 199
Piety a peculiar ornament to Old People, 289
The peculiar Excellence of divine Teaching, 321
More invited than are elected to Salvation, 353

VOL. III.

Objection of Sinners to the conditions of Salvation, 1
Divination, 33
Mankind bring nothing into, and carry nothing out of, the World but themselves, 97
The Wisdom of God in the Plan of Creation, 193
Paul's direction to awakened Sinners, 321

VOL. IV.

The natural Powers and Faculties of Sinners, depraved by the depravity of their hearts, 65
Paul's criminality in persecuting Christ, 225

Besides the preceding essays of Dr. Emmons, there are others in the Christian Visitor, Evangelical Magazine, and New England Telegraph.

In the year 1800, he published — very reluctantly, and at the overpowering solicitation of his friends, — his first volume of sermons, at Wrentham. In 1812, with the same unwillingness, he published his second volume at Boston, and received one hundred dollars for the copyright. In the year 1813, a "Collection" of his sermons which had been already published in pamphlets, was reprinted at Boston in a volume, constituting the third volume of his works. To this he consented not without the fervent persuasion of his friends. In the year 1823, his fourth volume of sermons was printed at Providence, R. I. In 1825, his fifth volume, and in 1826, his sixth

Digitized by Google

volume were printed in the same city. After his decease, six volumes of his discourses, the larger part of them being reprinted from former editions, were published at Boston in a connected series, accompanied with his Memoir of himself, and an additional Memoir by Rev. Jacob Ide, D. D. In 1850, a seventh volume was added to this series. A new edition of his sermons, a few of them having never been previously given to the press, was sent forth by the Congregational Board of Publication in 1860 and 1861.

Some of the Discourses named above, have gone through four or five editions. Many of them have encountered frequent and earnest criticism. In the retrospect of his life, Emmons employed the following simple words in regard to the publications which had awakened so much enthusiasm of either love or hatred:

"When I entered into the ministry, I resolved to discharge all the pastoral services, which are usually and justly expected of a minister, and to pursue such studies as I deemed the most intimately connected with my professional usefulness. Accordingly, I began to read pretty freely and to think pretty closely upon some of the most important theological subjects, that had been long and warmly agitated among different denominations of Christians. I imagined, that people were generally becoming more fond of *superficial*, than of *doctrinal* preaching, and were imperceptibly falling into a state of gross ignorance of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. Viewing our churches and religious societies in this dangerous situation, I thought I ought to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. This led me to preach doctrinally to my people for a number of years, before I durst venture to publish any thing that I had written or preached. But, after having committed several essays and single discourses to the press, I published numerous sermons on various subjects, time after time, in separate volumes. My principal aim in these publications was, to explain the meaning, to demonstrate the truth, and to illustrate the consistency of the primary doctrines and duties of Christianity, and thereby distinguish true religion from false." — *Memoir of himself.*

Digitized by Google

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE LIFE WORK OF EMMONS.

HAVING now looked within the long white house of Dr. Emmons, and seen his wife by his side, and his children around him; his vigorous friends riding occasionally to his spacious mansion; such men as Hon. Thomas W. Thompson and Prof. Alexander Metcalf Fisher sitting at his feet as theological learners, we are prepared to contemplate him in the great labor of his life. *His life work was that of a Christian Minister.* If his pupils are indebted to him for any part of their usefulness, they are indebted to his sermons; for by hearing him from his pulpit were they stimulated to learn, and by preparing himself for the pulpit was he stimulated to teach, the doctrines which educated them. If his publications have startled men from their drowsiness, it is because he was an animating preacher; for his printed works are mainly his pulpit discourses. When he was ordained, he expected to be nothing more than a parish minister. He aimed not to write sermons for distant readers, but to edify the men and women of Franklin by speaking to them. It did not enter his mind, that he would become a teacher of candidates for the ministry; his sole aim was to instruct the candidates for heaven in his own parish. We have seen that he has exerted a marked influence over the States of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, New York, Tennessee, but this influence has flowed from his parochial discourses. Thus he has contributed to raise the dignity of a *parish*, and to show that, through a secluded people, a minister may transmit a power over an entire land. He has helped to exalt the character of *sermons;* for he has made them the repository of a profound theological system. It is estimated that during the fifty-eight years of his ministerial activity, he preached six thousand times. Let us, then, consider



Digitized by Google

## § 1. *Dr. Emmons as a Preacher.*

### A.—His own Description of his Homiletic Plan.

It was "to aid young ministers" that more than forty years ago, he wrote the following statement of his homiletic principles:

"I resolved, upon my first entrance upon the pastoral office, to make preaching my principal object. It had appeared to me that many ministers, as soon as they had obtained a parish, began to be more inattentive to their public performances, especially to their preaching; and took less and less pains in preparing their public discourses. Such a practice, I thought, betrayed both want of wisdom and want of faithfulness. To avoid this error, I determined to take time for the preparation of my sermons, and endeavor to preach better from Sabbath to Sabbath, and from year to year.[1] I was convinced by experience as well as observation, that I could not long remain stationary, but must necessarily decline, if I did not improve, in preaching. I farther reflected that my people would naturally and justly expect me to improve in my public performances, and that with all my exertions it would be difficult to keep up with their expectations. Under these impressions I resolved to take and appropriate sufficient time to prepare for the Sabbath. Though I did not usually fix upon my subject in the beginning of the week, yet I took care to call up various subjects, from which I might select one for my next discourse.

"My delaying to fix upon any subject, until Friday or Saturday, was owing to two or three reasons. Sometimes I could not hit upon any subject that suited me, early in the week. Sometimes I found, by contemplating a subject, unexpected difficulties in the way of discussing it to my own satisfaction. And sometimes I did of choice delay fixing upon any subject, until the week was nearly elapsed, because I wished to follow providence,

[1] The permeating idea of Rev. Thomas Williams's Sermon, founded on Ecclesiastes 12: 9, and preached at the Funeral of Dr. Emmons, is this: "Because the preacher was *wise*," "he *taught* the people;" and, after they had learned what he gave them, he did not *cease* to instruct, but "he *still* taught the people knowledge;" he made progress himself, in order that he might remain able and apt to teach those who made progress after him.

Digitized by Google

and make my discourses as *occasional*[1] as possible. I always aimed in my preaching, first to instruct and then to impress the minds of my hearers. And to attain these two points, I observed the following things:

"In the first place, I determined to preach upon the most important and essential doctrines of the gospel. Indeed, I contemplated going through a complete system of divinity, and very soon after my ordination, I began to execute my design, and kept up a regular course of sermons, until I had gone about half way through my proposed system. Nor can I assign any better reason for finally dropping the scheme, than my own inattention and instability; for I found many advantages resulting from this practice. It often supplied me with subjects when no particular occurrence of providence, and no particular circumstance of my people, suggested any. Besides, it had a happy tendency to enlighten my people in the great doctrines of Christianity, and increase my own stock of theological knowledge. And I am persuaded, that studying and preaching systematically, is the best way for the preacher and hearer to become thoroughly acquainted with that scheme of sentiments, which runs through the Bible.

"In the next place, I endeavored to make my discourses doctrinal and argumentative, rather than superficial and declamatory. For this reason, I seldom preached textually; but chose my subject in the first place, and then chose a text adapted to the subject.[2] This enabled me to make my sermons more simple, homogeneal, and pointed; while at the same time, it served to confine the hearer's attention to one important, leading sentiment. Those who preach textually, are obliged to follow the

[1] "Produced on some special occasion:

'Those letters were not writ to all,
Nor first intended, but *occasional*.'
*Dryden*." — *Dr. Worcester's Dictionary.*

"A minister," says Dr. Emmons, "should attentively eye the hand of God, that the voice of his discourses may follow the voice of God in his providence."

[2] Not *very* seldom, however, did he adopt a plan that is partly textual. His sermon on the words, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work — in the grave" — is divided thus: "1. How men ought to find out their duty; 2. What is implied in doing their duty with their might; 3. Why they should do it in this manner."

Digitized by Google

text in all its branches, which often lead to very different and unconnected subjects. Hence, by that time the preacher has gone through all the branches of his text, his sermon will become so complicated that no hearer can carry away any more of it than a few striking, unconnected expressions. Whereas, by the opposite mode of preaching, the hearer may be master of the whole discourse, which hangs together like a fleece of wool. And in constructing a sermon, regard ought to be had to the memory, as well as to the understanding and attention of the hearer. A loose, desultory method of preaching may highly entertain an audience; though it will never enlighten their understanding, nor impress their conscience, nor oblige them to retain what they have heard. But when the preacher plans his sermon so as to exhibit one great, leading object, and in the prosecution of his subject, keeps that constantly in view; the hearer feels himself tied to the speaker, and cannot leave him until he has finished his discourse. And after a discourse has gained the constant attention of the hearer, he cannot very easily erase from his mind the instruction and impression he has received. It is, therefore, essential to instructive preaching, that a discourse be planned with great uniformity and simplicity. And on this account, it is generally best to choose a text, which fully and clearly contains the doctrine to be illustrated and improved. Accordingly, I have always endeavored to find a subject, before I looked for a text; and in looking for a text, I have aimed to find one, which was directly to my purpose, and naturally expressed or suggested the simple sentiment I meant to explain, confirm, and apply.[1]

"Nor is this all that is necessary to be regarded in planning a discourse, in order to render it instructive. There must be such divisions and subdivisions as will give the preacher scope to say all that is pertinent to the subject he is treating; and to say all in the most easy, natural, and forcible manner.[2] I have always

[1] Dr. Emmons formed this plan of choosing his subject before he chose his text, as early, at least, as 1773. It was in 1772-3 that Dr. Campbell wrote the Lectures, published long afterward, in which he says: "The first thing that falls under consideration is the choice of a subject."—"A subject being chosen, the next thing to be sought is the text." (See Campbell's Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence, Lect. VII.)

[2] Emmons remarks elsewhere: "Though Fenelon, and some other celebrated writers

Digitized by Google

found more difficulty in planning a discourse properly, than in putting it together afterwards. And the reason of this is plain. If a discourse be planned to advantage, the proper thoughts will readily occur, and the proper expressions will naturally present themselves. And when the plan, the thoughts, and language of a sermon are altogether natural, it can hardly fail of instructing those who hear and understand it.

"But I always aimed to *impress the conscience*, as well as *enlighten the understanding*, of my hearers. And to produce this effect, I paid great attention to the 'Improvement' or 'Application' of my discourses. I remember, before I began to preach, a plain, judicious, serious man gave me the first suggestion, that the *application* of a sermon is the most important part of it. I was struck with the truth of the observation, and resolved to retain and improve the advice. But when I began to write sermons, I found the application to be the most *difficult*, as well as most *important* part of a discourse. But this, however, did not discourage me from endeavoring to attain this excellence in preaching. And in order to attain it, I found it necessary to digest my subject well before I formed the plan of the discourse; and in planning it, to have a supreme respect to the application. The last thing in execution should be the first in intention.[1] The body of a discourse should be adapted to prepare the way for the improvement, in which the speaker is to gain his ultimate end. And it ought to be his ultimate end in every sermon, to make lasting impressions upon the hearts and consciences of his hearers. But this cannot be effected, without applying what has been said, in the body of the discourse, to the peculiar state and character of both saints and sinners. The

on public speaking, recommend a concealed method, and reprobate the practice of mentioning the leading topics and general divisions of a discourse, yet this seems calculated to excite attention, more than to convey instruction." — "Allowing Fenelon to be correct, in representing the whole business of the preacher to consist in proving, painting, and moving the passions; still the best way to effect all these purposes in the same discourse, is to divide it naturally, and to mention the heads distinctly."

[1] We need not remind the reader, that this sentence is substantially the old theological motto, which has been quoted for centuries, to prove the doctrine of *limited* atonement: "As the last thing in carrying out the atonement is to save the elect, and not to save all men; so the first thing in planning the atonement was to save the elect, and not to save all men; for what comes last in execution, comes first in intention."

Digitized by Google

preacher ought to be acquainted with the peculiar views and feelings of all classes of men, under all circumstances of life; and to construct his discourses so as to be able, in the application, to point them to every hearer's heart. Accordingly, I have made it my object to enter into the feelings of my people, while composing and delivering my sermons.

"Besides, I always endeavored to be intelligible to all my hearers of every age and capacity. With this view, I took pains to *explain*[1] the doctrines and duties I inculcated, with perspicuity and precision. And in explaining as well as illustrating and applying divine truths, I was careful to clothe my ideas in plain, familiar, decent language. I meant to use such words, and form my sentences in such a manner, that every common person might easily understand, and not easily mistake my meaning. But while I aimed at perspicuity, I meant to avoid a low, vulgar, slovenly mode of expression, and adopt, as far as I could, that pure, neat, middle style, which is intelligible to all, and displeasing to none.

"I endeavored, however, to unite prudence with plainness. This required me to exhibit obnoxious sentiments, at a proper time, in a proper connection and definite terms. There is an order in the first principles of Christianity; and when they are treated in their natural order, one truth serves to explain and confirm another. It is extremely difficult for hearers to understand some doctrines, until they have been taught others from which they flow, and with which they are intimately connected. I proposed gradually to lead my people into the knowledge of the most important, and self-denying doctrines of the gospel. And in order to do this to the best advantage, I usually brought in those truths which are the most displeasing to the human heart, by way of inference. In this way, the hearers were constrained to acknowledge the premises before they saw the conclusions, which, being clearly drawn, it was too late to deny. This I often found to be the best method to silence and convince gainsayers; and I believe there is hardly any other way, to lead

[1] Dr. Emmons's habit of *explaining* his thoughts, pursued him into the minutest ramifications of his theme. "There is a propriety, therefore," he says, "in the apostle's making use of milk and meat, *which are different species of food*, as metaphors to represent different sorts of truth," etc. Sermon on 1 Cor. 3: 2.



Digitized by Google

prejudiced persons to the knowledge and acknowledgment of some of the most essential doctrines of the gospel." — *Memoir of himself.*

This method of springing a thought suddenly upon his hearers was derived in part from his perusal of Shakespeare and other tragedians.[1] In many of his discourses he lays an ingenious train of argument to establish his proposition, and then surprises us by the most logical yet startling inferences.[2] In allusion to this habit of unexpectedly confounding his opponents, the following comparison has been made between him and his friend Sanford: "Mr. Sanford is like a surgeon who comes before the patient, and parades all his instruments, explains their mechanism, and describes their operation; — 'This is the knife for dividing the muscles, this the saw for cleaving the bone, this the forceps for grasping the arteries, this the ligament for tying them'; — and then he amputates the limb. But Dr. Emmons is like a surgeon who says nothing of any instrument, but, before the patient knows what is going on, the limb is off." A critical hearer, but an inveterate antagonist of both these pastors, has indicated the same idea in a more serpentine way: "Mr. Sanford rattles before he bites, but Mr. Emmons bites before he rattles." The expectation that the Franklin preacher's inferences would unfold some truth which it would be "too late to deny," stimulated his hearers to the closest scrutiny of the argument that had been uttered, and to the liveliest apprehension for the remarks that were to follow.[3] Dr. Emmons proceeds:

"But since captious hearers will always try to misrepresent those sentiments which they dislike, prudence farther requires the preacher to be careful, to deliver such sentiments in such terms as are incapable of misrepresentation. For instance, in treating on divine agency, it is necessary to use such expressions

[1] See p. 74, above.

[2] See his celebrated Sermon on "Judas," in the Original Edition of his Collected Works, Vol. VI. pp. 164–176.

[3] Often we smile when we first glance at the text, and then at a particular inference of a discourse of Dr. Emmons. Without a survey of the intervening thoughts, we cannot divine how the nimble athlete has made his leap from the *text*, "The words of the wise are as goads," to the "*improvement:*" "We learn from what has been said, that it is not very material, whether a minister preaches with notes or without."

Digitized by Google

as cannot be construed to mean, that God commits sin. So in addressing the impenitent and unrenewed, it is necessary to use such expressions as cannot be construed to mean either that they can do duty with an unholy heart, or that an unholy heart excuses them for neglecting duty. Such prudence as this, I ever meant to exercise in preaching the gospel; which ought to be exhibited in the most *plain*, which is the most *prudent* manner. In a word, I resolved, and, I believe, I have hitherto kept my resolution, to declare all the counsel of God." — *Memoir of himself.*

B. — General and Critical Remarks on Emmons as a Preacher and Writer.

About twenty years ago, Rev. Gardiner Spring, D. D., wrote the following words concerning the subject of this Memoir: "The more we have from the pen of Dr. Emmons, the better. Though I do not coincide with all which he has written, yet I consider his works as invaluable, especially to Christian ministers. For me to recommend them would be preposterous; quite as much so, as for a boy in the Rule of Three to recommend Euclid. Every thinking, reading man, even though he should differ widely from the views of that great divine, must derive benefit from the study of what he has written." It cannot be amiss to inquire into the characteristics of a preacher, who is thus *laudatus a laudato viro*, and who has moulded the style of so many American divines. The following is an imperfect summary of these characteristics:

1. — EMMONS SPENT BUT LITTLE TIME ON A SINGLE DISCOURSE.

One of the instructive facts connected with this author's sermons is, that he devoted very little time to the actual composition, and to the finish, of them as *individual* sermons. He elaborated them generically, not specifically. He concentrated his mind on the principles discussed in them, and, in general, allowed his words to trip of themselves into their places. Often, indeed, he did search out, laboriously, the fitting words for particular ideas, but the search was performed not for one sermon more than another. "The thing, the thing, — that is what I am after." "I have often spent a whole day," he once remarked, "in selecting the right phrase for a good thought," but this day was devoted to the use-

Digitized by Google

fulness of the thought, not to the excellence of any particular discourse. He made himself familiar with a subject, and then, like a genuine miller's son, he lifted the gate, and the sermon came out swiftly. As he often did not begin his discourses for the Sabbath until the Friday preceding, he could not devote much time to the balancing of words. "I must have my audience in plain sight, before I can compose this sermon," was his frequent remark. The old rule of Roscommon is: "Write with fury and correct with phlegm." The *furor* of Saturday eve often came upon the Franklin writer; but he did not correct at all. Fifty-four of his manuscript sermons are now lying before me. There is scarcely one interlineation in them or one erasure, indicating that he had once deliberately chosen a phrase which he had afterward deliberately rejected. He appears to have corrected merely the inadvertent lapses of his pen. After he had published his first fifty discourses, he never *rewrote*, and seldom even so much as *modified* a sermon for the press. With him it was emphatically true: *Scripta litera manet.* His style had become so natural to him, that he did not think of it. He had very few of what are called favorite discourses. In the main,—of course there were some exceptions,—but in a very unusual degree, he 'esteemed every sermon alike,' which he had ever written. More than once, when he was requested to print a volume of discourses, he opened his drawer, and let the applicants take what they chose. More than once, when desired to contribute articles for the Magazines, he opened his drawer, and allowed the Editors to make their own selection both of sermons and of extracts from them. More than once, when he was asked for autographs,[1] he opened his drawer and permitted the petitioners to take his

[1] Sometimes he did not wait to be asked before he gave his sermons away. Rev. Dr. Sawtelle, Chaplain to British and American Seamen at the Port of Havre, writes thus of the Franklin patriarch at the age of eighty-one: My visit to him "was a never to be forgotten one. The evening was spent in conversation at once delightful, instructive, and impressive. My sleep was sweet and invigorating. Morning prayers and breakfast refreshed both soul and body. My horse was at the door, the words 'Farewell' and 'God bless you,' were on the tip of my tongue, when this venerable theological giant threw his piercing eye upon me, and said, 'Be seated; I want you to read to me one of your sermons.' This was like a clap of thunder from a clear sky; and, from his tone and manner, I knew there was no retreat. It so happened, however, that while I had a full supply of skeletons, I had with me but one sermon fully written out, and that was my trial sermon before Presbytery, on the subject of the Atonement. 'That is the very one,' said he, 'I want to hear.' As I read, he would occasionally throw in a kind and just criticism; and at the close, he exclaimed, 'That will do,' and walked straight to his bureau, selected two of his own sermons upon Eph. 1: 10. Is. 1: 18; both written within that year, 1826. 'There,' said he, 'please accept these, with many thanks for your sermon and your visit.' I did accept them gratefully, and keep them still as remarkable specimens of chirography, to say

Digitized by Google

sermons for that purpose. On one occasion he gave more than twelve discourses to a single visitor, with whom he had no very particular acquaintance. "Help yourself," was his welcome word to collectors of manuscripts. Indeed, he was so simple-hearted in his benevolence, that he more than once gave up his sermons for the homely use of kindling fires. If his friends had not prized his manuscripts more than he did, he would have left but few legacies for the world.[1] As an individual composition, each one had cost him but little labor, and he was not miserly with regard to it. He felt that the discourse, when once preached, had done its intended work, and that he could easily write another having the same fitness to instruct "the people of Franklin." He was by nature diffident, and, therefore, he did not readily imagine that his manuscripts were of any peculiar or signal value.

This habit of thought had its advantages as well as evils. It kept alive and fresh and glowing his love for the preacher's work. The writing of sermons was never to him a task, stirring up in his mind a morbid anxiety about the details of their style. It was rather associated with living truths, and with the healthy joy of expressing them just as they rose up spontaneously within him. He guarded himself against that sickening appetency for perfection, which will polish away all positive excellence, and refine into nothing every natural beauty. We have read of an Italian author, who would whet and whet his knife till there was no steel left to make an edge. "Indeed," says Carlyle, "in all things, writing or other, which a man engages in, there is the indispensablest beauty in knowing *how to get done*. A man frets himself to no purpose, he has not the sleight of the trade, he is not a craftsman but an unfortunate borer and bungler, if he know not when to have done. Perfection is unattainable; no carpenter ever made a mathematically right angle, in the world; yet all carpenters know when it is right enough, and do not botch it and lose their wages in making it too right. Too much pains-taking speaks disease in one's mind as well as too little.

nothing of the logical powers in their composition by this Nestor of one of the phases of New England theology. Written upon the large-sized sheets of letter-paper — no interlineation — not a crooked line — not an undotted *i*, nor an uncrossed *t* — all plain as the printed page; and so carefully punctuated, that, were they sent to the press as they are, the compositor would not find a word or point to alter. A beautiful type, thought I, of the character of his mind, and the perspicuity with which it perceived and unfolded divine truth." — *Treasured Moments*, pp. 12, 13.

[1] Although Emmons began to preach as early as 1769, yet there were found among his papers very few manuscript sermons which were written before the year 1800, and scarcely one which was written before 1790. The great majority of the discourses, written during the first thirty years of his ministry, were scattered or destroyed.



Digitized by Google

The adroit, sound-minded man will endeavor to spend upon each business approximately what of pains it deserves; and with a conscience void of remorse will dismiss it then." Few authors have ever retained for seventy years a healthier taste, in this regard, than Dr. Emmons.

His peculiar indifference, however, to the rhetorical niceties of any individual discourse, should guard us against attempting to form our estimate of him on the basis of one insulated composition. We might as well judge of a forest by a single one of its trees. He cannot be safely compared with other writers, unless his entire work be laid along-side of theirs. Critics must remember, that he did not write with an eye to the printer's types, but with both his eyes upon his people; and that what he had written for oral address, he did not accommodate to the printed page; and what he had once adapted to the exigencies of his own parish, he did not select and arrange and adjust for the perusal of strangers. He is taken in his every-day attire, and, as far as he ever allowed himself to be, in *dishabille*. He has made no preparation for company. He has not painted a clapboard to be sent away and examined by men who wish to judge of his house. A comprehensive critic, then, will be careful to form no superficial judgment with regard to the man who held out as a pastor fifty-four years, and as a minister seventy-one years.

When we read the finished lines of Virgil, we must remember that the poet wrote his Georgics at the rate of one line per day. We find him "dictating a number of verses in the morning, spending the day in revising, correcting, and reducing them, and comparing himself, as Aulus Gellius mentions, to a she-bear licking her misshapen offspring into shape. We see Petrarch returning day after day to his sonnets, to alter some single word, or make some trifling change in the arrangement of a line. The manuscripts of Ariosto, whose style appears the very perfection of ease, and an almost spontaneous emanation, still exist at Ferrara, and show that many of the favorite passages in the Orlando were written eight times over. Scarcely less attention was bestowed upon the stanzas of the Gerusaleme of Tasso."[1]

The comparison between the first draught and the last draught of Pope's Iliad is a literary curiosity. The writings of Bossuet which were prepared for the press by himself, are as dissimilar in finish of style to those which were prepared by his Benedictine Editors, as are the productions of two different men. In writing his Reflections on the French Revolution, Edmund Burke had sometimes more than twelve proofs worked off and destroyed, before he could satisfy himself. Rousseau, says

[1] Encyclopædia Britannica.

Digitized by Google

that his own blots, emendations, and transcriptions, before printing, and after it, were numberless. The Editor of Massillon's Lent Sermons, regards it as a prodigy that he finished a discourse in so short a time as ten or twelve days. This eminent preacher sometimes rewrote a single sermon, fifteen or even twenty times. A distinguished scholar in our own land rewrote the most useful of his sermons thirteen or fourteen times, and labored in connection with a literary friend two whole days on as many sentences. A living divine who has been called the prince of our pulpit orators, spent a fortnight on a single paragraph of one of his published sermons, and three months in elaborating another discourse, which has already accomplished more good than the four thousand sermons which were written by another of our pastors, at the rate of two a week. On the blank leaf of one of Dr. Griffin's manuscripts, it appeared that his discourse had been preached ninety times. Thus had it been touched and retouched, reviewed and recomposed, until, so far as the author's power availed, it was perfected. It is needless to add, that signal injustice is done to Dr. Emmons when one page of his discourses is compared with a certain page of John Foster's Essays; for it is not at all improbable, that John Foster expended more labor in directly fitting those few sentences for the press, than Dr. Emmons expended in directly fitting for the press all the sermons which he ever published.

If the Franklin pastor had concentrated upon five hundred sermons the toil which he distributed over fifty hundred, and if he had adjusted these five hundred to each other in one well compacted system, he would have secured more readers through a longer succession of ages. But then, he would have been a minister for the world, but he chose to be the minister of Franklin. Then, he would have been Emmons the author, but he aimed to be Emmons the parish minister, holding out in one place until his head was covered "with those gray hairs which are a fruit of righteousness and a crown of glory."

### 2.—His sermons are not printed as they were delivered.

Another important fact, which in some aspects we regret, is, that he did not give to his written sermons the form which they had as he first delivered them. *To a large extent, he was an extemporaneous preacher.* In the forenoon of the Sabbath, he explained his text and proved his doctrine; in the afternoon, he drew his inferences and made his application. The former part of the sermon was written; the latter part was studied, but in great degree unwritten. When he laid down his large note case, and raised the spectacles to the top of his head, and developed

Digitized by Google

the *finals* of his careful reasonings, he was often wrought up to the most subduing eloquence.[1] In his advanced age he filled out with written words the blank spaces which he had left for extemporaneous remark; but the old man of eighty years could not, in his solitary study, rekindle the same fires that were lighted in his pulpit, when the glow of his youth was upon him and his eager auditors were before him. These extemporaneous flashes went out forever. It is a sad loss. The effectiveness of his perorations cannot be easily conjectured by those who read the present calm phrases, without having heard the former spirited appeals. The old eagle flapping his wings gives a faint token of the speed with which he once flew. We often detect sentences near the close of this author's sermons, which appear abrupt, unfinished. They are the signs of those earnest appeals which leaped from him, but were too rapid to be afterwards recalled. One of his printed sermons ends with the words: "Plead not the busy season, as an excuse for delay." But these words are a memento of a now lost appeal, to make the earthly harvest a forerunner of the spiritual and eternal rest. Another sermon ends with the words: "The repeated instances of mortality of late, solemnly admonish all to prepare for death, which might be their lot." This abrupt peroration will not illustrate the remark of a celebrated divine, who says: "Often, when I heard Emmons utter his extemporaneous words at the close of his discourses, I felt that Demosthenes did not surpass him." At such times it has been said of Emmons, somewhat as was said of William Pitt by Charles James Fox: "I never hesitate for *a* word; Pitt never hesitates for *the* word."

### 3.—The influence of his sermons depended somewhat on the occasion and manner of their delivery.

Very few of Emmons's discourses appear to have been preached on extraordinary occasions; and the common idea is, that his elocution was a hindrance rather than aid to his success in the pulpit. But he was so keen-sighted in detecting the moral state of his people, he was so quick to discern the needs and the wants of the individuals who heard him, that he made all his sermons apt, pertinent, timely. The services of one Sabbath awakened a curiosity, which was exactly met by the services of the Sabbath following. "That is just the text," "That is just the subject we were longing to hear discussed," was the frequent exclamation of his auditors. They came hungering for the bread of life to the sanctuary, where they found the identical morsels for which their appetite had been sharpened.

[1] In this respect many of his pupils resembled him. See pp. 230, 248.

Digitized by Google

It was not necessary that there be a railroad disaster, or a balloon ascension, in order to call the men of Franklin into their meeting-house. Their minister *made* occasions. The sermon of one Sabbath was often the theme of thought and remark throughout his parish, until the succeeding Sabbath. Dr. Emmons seldom made a lengthened allusion to any *physical* occasion, to hurricanes and shipwrecks; but the *occasions* which roused his parish were *intellectual* and *moral*, and resulted in the main from his sermons themselves.

And then his elocution; — in many respects it was lame and impotent. His voice was so feeble, that the remoter hearers, if they were strangers to him, could not easily catch his words. In the morning, when he read his manuscript, it was held up in his left hand before his face,[1] and his sentences were uttered with great rapidity. He seldom made a gesture, unless a kind of argumentative nodding of the head be considered a gesture. His figure was small and slight. But on the other hand he stood erect, his form and mien were dignified, he appeared modest, yet born to command, his ruddy face beamed with intelligence; his eye twinkled, and darted out quick and living thoughts; he ever appeared to be in earnest, avoiding "a certain easy, graceful negligence" of mien which he repeatedly condemns; his tones were natural, and his whole manner was germane to his theme. In the afternoon, when his "Improvement" came on, he would read the carefully written statement of one inference, then lifting his spectacles to the top of his head, he would freely utter his brisk thoughts in a brisk style, his eye would flash on his audience, his whole body would glow as if instinct with his whole doctrine; soon he would adjust his glasses for another written statement of another inference; again raise his spectacles; pour out a new stream of fresh extemporaneous remark, and with this alternation between the reading of his manuscript and the unhampered method of a pithy talker, he enchained the attention of his hearers until they regretted to hear him utter his last sentence. He seldom closed his sermon or his prayer with the word, "amen." This he regarded as a "vain repetition," no more obligatory than the pedilavium.

Those who have listened to his "still, small voice," his earnest, expressive, authoritative, rapid intonations, can feel,[2] more easily than we can describe, the significance of words like the following:

[1] His rule had a peculiar significance: "Keep your sermon before your self, not your self before your sermon."

[2] Sometimes he was so much affected in the delivery of his discourse, that he found it difficult to enunciate his words. "When I first heard him preach," said one of his pupils, "he was sixty years of age. It was a stormy Sabbath. I supposed that the service would be omitted. But when the hour for the service arrived, I saw the

Digitized by Google

"You [mourners for the recent dead] are now under *trial;*—and under trial for *eternity;*—and perhaps the *heaviest*, if not the *last*, trial you will *ever* have before your day of trial will *cease*, and you [will be] put into a state—where trials can *never* do you any good.—If you *thought* this would be the case, would it not alarm you?—And do you not *need* to be alarmed?—Do not *all* need to be alarmed?—Deaths, *sudden* deaths are frequently occurring.—Let *Christians* trim their lamps.—Let sinners *fly* to the ark of safety.—And let *all* stand in the posture of servants, waiting the coming of their Lord. He may come quickly and suddenly. And *you* know not what a day may bring forth. You are walking on the *brink* of time and *verge* of eternity. Oh, that you *would* be wise, that you would *consider* your latter end!"

The doctrine of Universal Salvation "is replete with *infinite* mischief. It strikes at the *root* of all experimental religion. It confounds *all* notions of virtue and vice. It destroys *all* distinction of character. It saps the *foundation* of morality. It takes off every *restraint* from vice. It opens the *flood-gates* of iniquity. It renders *even God*, and *Christ*, and the prophets, and the apostles, the ministers of sin. It speaks peace to the wicked, to whom, saith God, there is *no* peace. It has, indeed, every signature of a damnable doctrine."

He was wont to close a sermon or a paragraph with a brief, pithy question, uttered in a quick, pointed style. His description of the practical atheism of men utterly dependent on God, ends thus: "*What* a world do we live in!—And *whose* world is it?" This question, uttered in a sharp tone, drew a sharp line on the hearts of his auditors. The last time I ever heard him preach,—it was in the eighty-second year of his age,—he descended to a style of remark unusually familiar for one who preserved so high a sense of ministerial dignity. He had applied the *reductio ad absurdum* to various pleas of the impenitent, and then surprised them with the following abrupt conclusion: "Now *here* you are, *here* you are,—in a corner.—How can you get away?—Not to the right, for that is hedged up.—Nor to the left, for *that* is hedged up.—You are in a *corner*. Will you try to *escape*? You *can't*, you can't escape. You must *yield*," etc. After he had thus cornered his opponents, he was truly powerful; not with what are usually called the physical properties of an orator, but with the force of a mind conscious of a previous triumph in argument, and stirred to its very depths with pious feeling, and uttering its thoughts in earnest, authoritative, solemn tones.

sleighs begin to pass the door of my boarding-house. I hurried into the sanctuary, and found it full. Not more than two or three persons entered after the doctor. This was the more remarkable, as at that time either there was no bell on the meeting-house, or else it was out of order and not rung. It was evident in the forenoon, that the preacher's subject had taken full possession of him. In the afternoon, his tears chased each other down his cheeks, he well nigh sobbed, and the sighs of the hearers were frequent and plainly heard." Yet the sermon which produced this effect is now published, and no reader would imagine that it produced such an obvious excitement of the audience.

Digitized by Google

By his concluding questions he often summoned his hearers to give an account of themselves. He arraigned them before a bar of trial, or placed them on the witness stand. The following is a specimen:

"*Every* one ought to be prepared to meet death *first*. Should the question be put to the aged, Are *you* ready to meet death first? what would you say? Were the question put to the man of middle age, Are you ready to meet death first? *what* would you say? Were the question put to the youth, Are you ready to meet death first? what would *you* say? Or were the question put to the *child*, Are you prepared to meet death first? he would in the simplicity of his heart say, No. And *he* would have the best excuse for *his* negligence. The mouth of every *other* unprepared person would be stopped."

Some have supposed that Dr. Emmons was not only inexpert in, but also utterly regardless of his elocution. It is true that he never rehearsed a paragraph before a mirror, but he was careful to cherish a living interest in his theme of discourse, in order that his inward glow might warm his outward manner. "The mind makes the orator," was his motto. His system of elocution he gave in these words:

How should a minister appear and speak in the pulpit? "His voice, his looks, his gestures, and his whole deportment, should be wholly governed by his ultimate end, which is to penetrate and impress the minds of his hearers. This is an infallible guide. For while he means to penetrate and impress the minds of his audience, he will necessarily avoid every unnatural tone, unmeaning expression, and insignificant action. While he *means* to be natural, he *will be* natural. While he *means* to be significant, he *will be* significant. While he *means* to impress, he *will* impress. While he *aims* at the understanding, he *will penetrate* the understanding. While he *aims* at the conscience, he *will* penetrate the conscience. While he *aims* at the heart, he *will* penetrate the heart. The preacher always discovers his ultimate aim to every discerning hearer. His tone, his air, his attitude, is always correspondent to the impression which he means to make. If he means to attract the eyes of the congregation, his deportment will proclaim it. If he means to please the imagination, and gain the esteem and applause of his hearers, his voice, his countenance, his language, and all his attitudes will discover it. Or if he means to promote the instruction, conviction, and edification of his people, he will *practically tell them so*, by the manner, as well as the matter, of his preaching."

"It is perfectly obvious, before a preacher has proceeded far, what his leading object is. Some men preach their subjects, and some themselves. Some have the rare faculty of hiding themselves behind their subjects. You think nothing of the man, but only of the subject about which he speaks. Others are directly the opposite of this. They preach themselves, and not their subject. You think little of the subject, but only of the man. The preacher employs his subject only as a means of displaying himself to better advantage. He expects you to admire his fine person, his beautifully rounded periods, his graceful attitudes and gestures, his white handkerchief, and his white hand. Be sure not to imitate such preachers, unless you mean to make yourself the scorn and the pity of all good men."

Digitized by Google

4.—He was a representative of intellectual preachers.

"The preaching of American Congregationalists of a certain age and school, may be characterized as metaphysical; that of Dr. Emmons was such in an eminent degree. In this, as far as our knowledge goes, it differs from all other preaching since the world began. We say preaching, for metaphysical theology has flourished in the most brilliant periods of the church; but only here has the wall been broken down between the church and the schools."—*Princeton Review*, Vol. XIV. p. 535.

"The common idea that he [Dr. Emmons] was a metaphysical preacher in the ordinary acceptation of the term, is entirely incorrect. He was logical, discriminating, and often *nice* in his definitions and distinctions, but always clear, simple, and intelligible. The body of his discourses was strongly banded together by argument and close reasoning, but in the application they were singularly practical, direct, and *home;*—and woe unto those who stood in the way of his battery when he had fixed his guns, and was ready to apply the match and let them off."—*MS. Letter of Rev. Joel Hawes, D. D., of Hartford, Conn.*

Between the two statements here recorded is a direct contradiction. Dr. Hawes is doubtless correct in his estimate of the general character of Emmons's sermons. Dr. Hawes, however, does not intend to deny that Emmons was an *intellectual* sermonizer. That man deserves our study, who is a distinct representative of an entire class. That style of preaching deserves our study, which can be characterized by its foes as different "from all other preaching since the world began." Emmons was, in an eminent degree, a *representative* of the intellectual sermonizers. He deserves our study because he sets out their distinctive lines in bold relief. He uttered vigorous thoughts in impressive language, with peculiar frequency and with peculiar ease. He did not rely on men for his support, but on truth. He rested not on the decisions of councils, but on argument. He cherished a reverence for proof. He did not appeal to the harmony of the church fathers, but to the mutual harmony of biblical doctrines. There is something not only characteristic of the man, but truly sublime in his description of "weighty and powerful preachers." "Their discourses have a peculiar energy, which, as we often see, bears down the minds of a whole assembly." This energy comes not from an *association with imposing judicatories* of the church, but from *the combined force of mutually related truths.* He writes:

These preachers "have the advantage of speaking under the united weight and influence of the whole of the divine system. As they consider every subject in connection with the whole counsel of God, so the whole counsel of God seems to be more or less brought into view by every subject they handle, which necessarily gives it additional force and sublimity. For the whole counsel of God inseparably connects time

Digitized by Google

and eternity, heaven and hell, all worlds, and all beings in the universe. And every truth exhibited in such a connection as this, must appear unspeakably weighty and solemn to every discerning mind. Hence the preaching of these men has a superior power to seize the heart and conscience; and the Gospel as it falls from their lips, falls, as our Saviour says, like a weighty stone, which will grind every opposer to powder."

We do not affirm that Emmons is a perfect model for intellectual preachers.[1] Faultless ministers, outside of partisan biography, are rare. But in an age when men and women are tempted to become more and more superficial, to fall in love with forms and ceremonies, rather than to delight in luminous and tonic thought, the Franklin metaphysician is a timely mentor. Congregationalism can never flourish when the pulpit is effeminate and ostentatious. Unless there be manly discussion in the sermon, there will be in the hearer a fondness for parade. Where there is but little interest in religious doctrine, there will be a longing after the "dim religious light," etc. etc. The Puritan spirit is dependent on the substantial truths of Puritanism; and if these truths be not preached and *proved*, the spirit of fashion will reign. As the love for these truths declines, the love for a gaudy ceremonial will increase. When the sun is the lowest, the shadows are the longest.

The logical element in the pulpit may become tedious. There was peril in the Garden of Eden, much more in the groves of philosophers. The tree of knowledge may yield apples of dry dust. All men have not the power of Emmons, but it must be admitted that *he* attracted hearers to the sanctuary by his argumentative processes. His parishioners were curious to see what he would make out. He often said: "Men love to cry, but hate to think;"[2] still the mind has an instinct of reasoning, and this, as well as every other instinct may be employed as an aid of divine truth. If hearers may be attracted to the sanctuary by its "groined

[1] Rev. Samuel Whelpley, father of Rev. Philip Melancthon Whelpley, has given in his "Triangle" the following criticism on the earlier publications of the Franklin divine: — "Emmons is an original of the noblest class, and certainly one of the most decided character. No candid reader who reads for instruction, is disappointed, or rises from the perusal of one of his sermons without some benefit. His sermons generally indicate extensive knowledge and acuteness of judgment. His style is neat, appropriate, pure, and correct, though less elegant and splendid than that of Hall, and less easy and graceful perhaps than that of Jay. In fervency and pathos, we may have some in our own country who excel him; and his sermons are, perhaps, too didactic — too much the essay and not sufficiently the popular address, to answer, in the best manner, all the ends of preaching. With less of the flowers of May, or fruits of October than some others, his sermons may be compared to the meridian hour of a clear day in June, when the Sun puts forth his strength, the Summer displays her maturity, and Vegetation all her energy."

[2] Here is a singular instance of an apothegm *really* consistent, but *verbally* inconsistent with another apothegm of Dr. Emmons: "Men love to hear, but hate to feel." — The aphoristic style admits apparent contradictions.



Digitized by Google

arches," or its starred ceiling, or its "black walnut pews," why not by the logic of the minister? Is not the fascination of syllogisms as innocent and innocuous as that of a chime of bells? We must shun extremes. We allow that men may be made opinionative and headstrong by their practice in reasoning. So they may be made shallow and fastidious by their practice in church song. But shall we abandon a normal avenue to the heart, because it is often thronged by unseemly motives? In the year 1860, we find in a public newspaper the following programme of a Protestant Church Service on the Sabbath day, in the city of New York:

Venite and Psalms for the day chanted.

The Te Deum and Benedictus, from Cutler's Service in E flat.

The Nicene Creed chanted to Gregorian tone 8.

The Anthem by Marcello, "O Lord our Governor, how excellent is thy name in all the world." The solos in this anthem are sung by Dr. Guillmette and Master James Little.

Hymn 154, "Before Jehovah's awful throne."

After the Sermon, is sung Gloria in Excelsis.

Choir is "Antiphonal," and composed exclusively of men and boy choristers — 6 basses, 3 tenors, 4 altos, 10 sopranos, all in surplices.

The boy (James Little) who takes the solos in the anthem, has a voice of extraordinary power and splendor.

The service is choral throughout. The organ accompanies the choir at a distance of 150 feet, and is played by Mr. Cutler, the director of the music.

No Franklin audience was ever allured into the meeting-house by any such display. But was there no adventitious allurement to that plain edifice? Dr. Emmons well knew that intellectual appeals are attended with a temptation to sacrifice the emotive to the speculative nature.[1] He buffeted this temptation. But he knew, also, that these intellectual appeals are needed for the *permanent* and *progressive* interest, as well as for the power and the authority of the pulpit.[2] His favorite principle was: "The wise preacher will *instruct* in order to *affect*, and *enlighten* in order to *inflame*." "He will address the understanding before the conscience, and the conscience before the heart. This is the order of nature; and this order must be observed, to make the deepest impression on the human mind. When the understanding is informed, and the conscience awakened, then the affections may be raised *as high as possible*. There is no danger of raising the affections *too* high by the exhibition of truth, though *there is nothing else that can raise them higher*."[3]

[1] See p. 53 above.

[2] Bibliotheca Sacra, Vol. IV. pp. 97–104.

[3] There is a singular felicity in the style of Emmons when he intimates the importance of *considering* the truth. In one of his sacramental sermons (Orig. Ed. V. 508),

Digitized by Google

That a man who drew so many inferences as Dr. Emmons, should never draw a wrong one, is more than could be expected from even the Stagyrite himself. His false conclusions, however, are the result of an error in his premise, oftener than of a crookedness in his passage from the premise to the inference. For more than seventy years, it has been familiarly said: "Take the first step with him, and you must take the last." "Start with him, and you must go with him." "Give him his first proposition, and he will get out of you his third." When he steps from a false principle, he rushes onward, sweeping every thing in his train, to its logical sequence. Thus, in one of his metaphysical discourses he adopts the proposition: "To be incomprehensible is the same as to be infinite." Then he reasons: Though the Infinite One "be incomprehensible in respect to his creatures, yet he is not incomprehensible in respect to himself; and therefore, notwithstanding he is infinite in respect to his creatures, yet he is not infinite in respect to himself," or he is not absolutely infinite.[1] These are bold words. They would rouse a hearer from somnolence. But they are a logical result from the inaccurate premise. Dialectically, the conclusion is plausible; philosophically it is erroneous; in this, as in other instances, it is interesting to inquire, *where* the error begins, *how* did it arise, *why* is it maintained. Such inquiries, more than a sonorous voice, or vehement gesticulation, provoke the vigilance of the hearer.

### 5. — Was Emmons plain and simple in his discourses?

"As a metaphysical writer, he [Emmons] has, within our knowledge, no superior, if an equal, for stating exactly what he means in the shortest, clearest, plainest, strongest, and (in the sense of the mathematicians) most elegant manner. You never doubt an instant what his doctrine is. You never find him like Dr. Taylor, complaining that he is not understood. Nay, he *is* understood, and that too well."—*Princeton Review*, Vol. XIV. p. 532.

he remarks: "The exhibition of a crucified Saviour before our eyes is a solemn address to our *understandings*, and calls for the most serious and fixed *contemplation* upon the most glorious truths and objects which can employ the *minds* of the most exalted and holy creatures in heavenly places. The manifold wisdom of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ, and ought to be *contemplated* while celebrating the memorials of his death. 'Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, *consider* the apostle and high-priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.'"

[1] Among the different theories with regard to the Infinite, Dr. Emmons adopted the following: We have a positive idea of the Infinite, but there is no object actually existing, of which we have this positive idea. There is no real thing or real being that fills out our apprehension of the absolutely illimitable. Such a thing or being would involve internal contradictions and absurdities. When asked, "What is space?" Dr. Emmons answered: "Nothing." When we speak of real existences as infinite, we have only a negative idea of their infinity, and simply mean that they are incomprehensible.

Digitized by Google

Is it possible that the most metaphysical discourses which have been preached "since the world began,"[1] are also among the most perspicuous? How, whence can it be that the very *last* epithets which *some* would apply to Emmons, are an "extemporaneous preacher," and a "preacher to the *masses*," while the *first* epithets which *others* apply to him are, "a simple, plain preacher," "one who cannot be misunderstood?"

*a.* He aimed to be Perspicuous.

"When I sit down to compose a sermon," he said to Dr. Hawes, of Hartford, "I ask three questions: 1. What do my people know about this subject? 2. What do I know about it which my people do not know? 3. How can I make my people know what I know, and they do not?" His bold, and oft-repeated maxim was: "We should endeavor to make our *people* know all that *we* know about the *Gospel, which comprises all the designs and operations* of the Deity."

Hundreds have entertained the idea that Emmons cared for nothing more than to spin metaphysical cobwebs, whether anybody else could see through them or not. But these critics have entirely mistaken the man. He was sure that the doctrines of the Gospel *could* be made plain; he *meant* to make them plain; he believed that he *had* made them plain. He had devoted so many years of intense thought to the more recondite of these doctrines, that it was natural for him to regard many propositions as perspicuous which others deemed abstruse. Knowledge is easy to him that understandeth. A mathematician, like Lavoisier, smiles at the trouble which tyros experience in working out the "simple problems" of Algebra. Often, Emmons promises at the outset: "*I shall make this appear;*" or, on a doctrine of *some* difficulty: "I shall *endeavor to make this appear;*" or, on a doctrine of *special* difficulty: "I shall endeavor *if possible* to make this appear." "*To make it appear*" is his favorite and characteristic phrase. In his ingenious sermon,[2] on 1 Cor. 4: 2, "I have fed you with *milk* and *not* with *meat;* for *hitherto* ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able," he has given the following analysis of milk and strong meat, and has indirectly intimated the following reasons for classifying the majority of his sermons under the genus of milk diet:

First, in order to learn what doctrines are milk and NOT meat, we must learn what doctrines the apostle did actually preach to the Corinthians. The two Epistles are

[1] See p. 289, above.

[2] Various plagiarisms have been committed upon this original discourse.

Digitized by Google

searched. The decisive texts are quoted. *It is made to appear* "from the two letters which the Apostle wrote to the Corinthians, that he publicly and plainly taught them the doctrine of *total depravity*, the doctrine of *regeneration*, the doctrine of *disinterested love*, the doctrine of *saving faith*, the doctrine of *divine agency in human actions*, the doctrine of the *final perseverance of saints*, the doctrine of *divine sovereignty* in the conversion of sinners, the doctrine of *personal election* to eternal life, and the doctrine of *three equally divine Persons* in the only living and true God."

Secondly. Having fed the Corinthians with these nine doctrines, why does the apostle call them milk?

(*a.*) These nine doctrines "are *easy to be understood*; milk is much easier to digest than meat; meat is for men, but milk is for babes. Those of the weakest constitution can bear this light and easy food. So the first principles of the oracles of God are plain and level to the lowest capacity."

(*b.*) These nine doctrines are called milk, because they "are highly pleasing to the pious heart. Milk is not only easy to the stomach, but agreeable to the palate. The Scripture represents milk and honey as the richest dainties in nature: what is sweeter than honey, or what is more grateful to the taste than milk?"[1]

(*c.*) These nine doctrines are called milk because they "are nourishing as well as pleasing to the children of God; it is the nature of milk to promote the health and growth of the human body; and it is equally the nature of divine truth to improve the heart as well as the understanding of true believers."

*Improvement a.*—"If the metaphor of *milk* has been properly explained, then we may easily conjecture what is to be understood by the metaphor of *meat*. If by milk the apostle means the more plain and important doctrines of the Gospel, it seems to be natural to suppose that by meat he means some other sentiments less plain, and less necessary to be known by common Christians," sentiments which he had *not* made prominent in his Epistles to the Corinthian churches. The doctrines, then, which are meat and not milk, are such as relate to the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation; the types and predictions in the Old Testament; the character and coming of the promised Messiah; "the predictions in the New Testament concerning the great apostacy in the Christian church; the rise and fall of the Man of sin; the calling in of the Jews; the spread of the Gospel in the millennium; and the state of things from that day to the end of the world. We know the apostle sometimes preached upon these high points, to which St. Peter alludes in his second epistle. 'Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you: As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction.' We will not now affirm that the subjects which we have mentioned were the only subjects which the apostle calls strong meat; but we will presume to say that all the subjects which we have mentioned are more difficult to explain and comprehend, than the doctrines which he taught the Corinthians, and which he calls milk."

*Improvement b.*—The nine "doctrines which Paul preached to the Corinthians have been greatly misrepresented. He represents them as milk; but others represent

[1] See p. 109, above.



Digitized by Google

them as meat. He represents them as easy to be understood; but others represent them as dark and mysterious. — How many people have been strongly prejudiced against the doctrines which Paul preached to the Corinthians, by hearing them represented by their public teachers, as meat, as strong meat, too strong for any Christians in the world to bear."

*Improvement c.* — This subject affords an infallible criterion, by which to determine who are the *plainest* preachers in point of sentiment. — "The Socinians, Arians, Pelagians, and other sectaries, who early opposed the pure and simple doctrines which Christ and the apostles taught, were obliged to have recourse to logical, metaphysical, and philosophical subtilties, in their own defence. And it is still the case that those who preach against the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of election, the doctrine of divine sovereignty, the doctrine of divine agency, and the doctrine of total depravity, are constrained either to renounce reasoning altogether, or else to reason in the most intricate, obscure, unintelligible manner. There never was, and there never can be, any false scheme of religion so easy to explain and understand, as that true scheme of religion which Paul taught the Corinthians. Those, therefore, who preach the very same doctrines which Paul preached, must be, of all others, the plainest preachers in point of sentiment."

The basis of this truly original discourse is an old maxim of Dr. Emmons that "one man will arrange truths so that a child can understand them, and another man will disarrange them so that nobody can understand them." We therefore remark:

*b.* He arranged his Ideas in a luminous Order.

He held up the doctrines in such a relative position, that each one of them illumined the others. He derived a second truth from a first truth, and thus illustrated both of them. His "inferences" were one source of his transparency. His course of thought was plain, and this made his speech translucent. The Princeton Review characterizes Emmons thus: "His method of sermonizing we consider the worst of all methods." This remark is perspicuous. Still it may be made clearer by the following reminiscence of that excellent man, Dr. Hawes of Hartford, who writes:

"I never heard a man preach, whose sermons I could remember as well as I can remember his. I can now recall sermons which I heard him deliver forty-five years ago, with as much distinctness in the main outline and leading thought, as if I heard them a week since."

*c.* He repeated his Ideas.

"You do not repeat enough," was the answer of an eminent attorney, who had been asked by a clergyman why the pulpit was so ineffective. "I could never gain a verdict from a jury, unless I repeated my thoughts

Digitized by Google

oftener than you repeat yours." — When Dr. Chalmers was interrogated with regard to the secret of his rhetorical success, his reply was: "Repetition, Repetition, Repetition." Dr. Emmons has been criticized for *excess* in reiterating his favorite thoughts. The criticism will be mitigated, if we remember that in his unpublished sermons, these thoughts do not appear and reappear so often as in his printed works; for in his printed works his more peculiar methods of thought and speech are introduced, rather than those methods in which he more nearly resembled other men. It must be conceded, however, that he did strike and strike and strike, until the rock was rent and he inserted in it what he meant to insert. He knocked and knocked again, and knocked once more, and continued knocking until the gate was opened or broken through, and he entered just as he had resolved to enter the barred castle.

His reiterations of the same word, though sometimes a blemish, are at other times a beauty. He often augments the force of certain phrases by reproducing them at regular intervals. Perhaps no author, except Macauley, exhibits so many instances of this emphatic repetition. Passages like the following are among the most notable characteristics of his sermons:

Nothing can be said against the total depravity of unrenewed men, which cannot be said against the total depravity of Satan. "If it be said that they love those that love them, so does he. If it be said that they are kind and friendly to those that promote their interest, so is he. If it be said that they do, in their conscience, approve of what is holy, just, and good in others, so does he. He approved of the holiness of Christ, when he called him 'the Holy One of God.' If it be said that they do in their conscience disapprove of what is selfish and sinful in others, so does he. He represented Job as selfish, and condemned him as wicked."

"The heart of every one extends just as far as his apparent interest extends, and increases in magnitude just as the knowledge of his interest increases, whether his interest be selfish or benevolent." "When David was a shepherd, his mind and his heart were as small as his flock. When he became a general, his mind and his heart were as large as his army. And when he ascended the throne of Israel, his mind and his heart were enlarged in proportion to the number of his subjects, the extent of his kingdom, and the important interests of the nation."

"Here is a dividing line which sinners cannot pass over. They can pass over many other things in the conduct and character of Christians, and stand side by side with them, with great confidence and self-approbation. If Christians are industrious and laborious in their callings, so are they. If Christians are honest in their dealings, so are they. If Christians are faithful to their trusts, so are they. If Christians are beneficent to others, so are they. If Christians avoid profaneness, levity, and every appearance of external evil, so do they. If Christians maintain family prayer, attend public worship, and hear the word of God with seriousness and attention, so do they. But if Christians really do desire and wait for their appointed change, here they fail and shrink from the comparison."

Digitized by Google

d. He spoke as he thought.

"I once inquired of him," says Dr. Mark Tucker, "how he obtained his style of writing." He replied, "I never thought of my style; I wrote as I thought." His theory was that a man should have no *exoteric*, which is different from his *esoteric*, idea, or language. He employed the simple Saxon words, with which his ideas first clothed themselves in the silence of his own meditations. The following paragraph contains a development of his own rhetorical method:

"The wise preacher will choose the best words and place them in the best order, to enlighten the mind and affect the heart. When any person means to impress the mind of another, his design always dictates a natural style, which is the most intelligible and the most forcible. The general who means to be heard and regarded, speaks the language of authority. And the beggar who means to be heard and pitied, speaks the language of distress. They both speak in the words in which their thoughts and feelings are concerned, and therefore they both speak the spontaneous language of nature, which all understand and most sensibly feel. The preacher, like every other person, always thinks in words; and the words, in which he thinks upon his subjects, are the words to be used in his discourses. Could our thoughts drop from our pens, or from our lips, in the very words in which they first rise in our minds, we should write and speak in the most easy, natural, and forcible manner. We often lose the energy of our thoughts and feelings, by trying to express them in the language of art, instead of the language of nature. Why do we find it so difficult to describe our past feelings, in the view of a great, or terrible, or sublime object? The principal reason is, we have lost our feelings, and of consequence, the proper language to describe them."

Here is the secret of the power by which Emmons united his severe analysis with his natural, artless diction. He might have introduced scholastic terms, and betrayed a consciousness of familiarity with books; but he found his delight in conveying with ease to an audience of farmers, such thoughts as the style of Cudworth conveys with difficulty to a recluse philosopher. His simplicity conceals his real greatness from anserous critics. "Any one can write just so, without effort," is a familiar objection to his style. But the difficulty will be, not so much to write in his style without any effort, as to write in it with the most judicious effort; for it is an old remark of Horace,

——"Ut sibi quivis
Speret idem, sudet multum, frustraque laboret
Ausus idem."

Both the ancient and the modern critics have defined simplicity of mind and manners, to be a virtue which often elicits a smile from the man who notices it, and gives him a momentary idea of his superiority to the

Digitized by Google

man in whom it is noticed. When we remember that the great aim of Emmons was to *instruct* his rural auditors, we smile now and then at his simple ways of expounding the gorgeous or the delicate phrases of the Hebrew poets. He is determined to make them *plain*, whatever becomes of their poetry. He certainly succeeds in making David's ejaculation, "level to the lowest capacity" in the following comment: "'one thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.' *It was his sincere desire that his business might always admit of his being in the house of God every Sabbath; and he determined, as far as possible, to order his secular concerns so, that he might constantly attend the services of the sanctuary.*"[1]

e. Emmons explained his Theme.

In an eminent degree he was an expounder of *doctrine*. His first impulse was to "*open up*" a subject, as the old preachers of Scotland love to say. Whatever theories he touched, he first of all *enucleated*. He learned in East Haddam not to put the whole chestnut burr into the mouth of a child, but to open the outward integuments of the nut, and then to feed the hungry with the sweet meat. His sermons are treatises on the *nature* of things; and his own clear ideas on the *interior* of doctrines were so expressed as to let his hearers into the heart of divine truth. His own remark is: "Faithfulness in a steward of the mysteries of God principally consists in *unlocking*, *unfolding*, and in the clearest manner *displaying*, the whole character and whole counsel of" the Most High.

We make a distinction between an expounder of *doctrines*, and an expounder of *words*. The former Emmons was; the latter he was not. He struck at the *thing*, and had but little taste for criticism on *terms*. His sermons relate to the *realities*, not to the *dress* of sacred science. Referring to the analysis of words, and remembering his father's farm, he once remarked, that, 'when going through a process of verbal criticism, he felt as if he were going through a swarm of bees; he did not love to stop and kill every bee one by one, but he chose to get out of the buzz into the still air as quick as he could.' If the good man had not hurried

[1] This entire ease and *nonchalance* of the Franklin sermons account, in part, for the statement of Dr. Ide, that Emmons is "read without effort. So perfectly naked are his thoughts, that his reasoning upon the most profound subjects in theology is read with less effort of the mind than a common paragraph in a newspaper. A feeble minister was a short time time since heard to say, that he could read Emmons's sermons on the Sabbath, after being so exhausted by the labor of the day, that he could not endure conversation, nor even read a religious periodical."

Digitized by Google

on to the *doctrine*, if he had stopped and leisurely explained his *phrases* when he spoke of the *causation of sin*, he would have avoided many stinging misapprehensions of his doctrine. Hence we remark:

*f.* Emmons was not, in all Senses and in all Relations of the Term, a Plain Preacher.

The praises lavished on his luminous style are to be understood with some qualification. Although we acquiesce in the general verdict, that he "said what he meant, and meant what he said," we yet regard him as too rapid and intense in his thoughts for that perfect translucency of language, which has been sometimes attributed to the imperfect man. "I wish to impress this idea so deeply upon every mind, that it cannot be eradicated or forgotten;" this is one of his remarks. Now he must be more than human, if, with such a fervid wish, he did not sometimes give vent to a word more *impressive* in *one* relation, than *perspicuous* in *another* relation. Although we believe that much of his power resulted from his plainness, we believe also that much of his power resulted from his boldness, and that his boldness often interfered with his transparency in one signification of that term.

The phrase, plainness of style, has different meanings in different relations. At one time, it means perspicuity in relation to a certain subject, and sermons may be very plain, when they are as perspicuous as the nature of their theme allows, and yet, like the writings of Laplace, cannot be *easily* understood by the majority of men. At another time, the phrase means perspicuity in relation to the persons addressed; and treatises may be called perspicuous when they are readily comprehended by an audience of fathers, while they would be utterly unintelligible to an audience of children. At one time, the phrase means perspicuity in relation to some one feature of a subject, that feature being the only prominent one before the mind. A discourse may be entirely plain to readers who attend to this one feature alone, and yet may be obscure to such as fail to notice the limited reference of the words. At another time, the phrase means perspicuity in all relations, to the subject, to the hearers, to the single feature of the theme and to its general lineaments.

In some of the preceding senses, we endorse the remark of Professor Woods of Andover, that "the most important of all qualities, i. e. perspicuity, he [Emmons] had in an almost unequalled degree." But to affirm that, in the last-named sense, he is uniformly perspicuous, is to affirm that he has done, what no man before or since his day has ever attained. While each of his sentences may be intelligible in itself, it is not always easily understood in its relations; and while it may be as clear as the in-

Digitized by Google

tricate nature of the subject will allow, it is not always so clear as its unlettered readers demand.

The truth is, that the mind of Emmons had more varieties of phase than has been generally supposed. An entirely false estimate is put upon him when he is represented as a frigid, generalizing philosopher, holding up all truths in a "dry light," and in an exact equipoise. The reader may smile at the remark, yet the remark is just, that Emmons had in some particulars a rhetorical mind. He meditated on a theme; while he mused the fire burned; he spoke, because he must speak with a full free force on that one theme; he did not stop to square his present utterances with what he might advance on some other topic, at some other time; his intrepid proposition stirred up his auditors; how he could reconcile it with some previous proposition they could not divine; they were puzzled as well as startled, and so far forth as a writer is a puzzling one, he is not in all senses and in all relations a plain one. He may be as plain as his intricate topics allow, or as some feature of his theme requires, or as a particular class of auditors need, but he is not so plain that it is either impossible or unnatural for some men to misunderstand him. With one doctrine to enforce, with one aim in view, Emmons did, here and there, drop a remark which is not easily harmonized with another remark made in pressing home a different doctrine, and achieving a different end. Since the world was made, there never was an orator who did not enkindle his hearers with a word in apparent conflict with some other word, which he had previously employed to inflame their minds for some other purpose. The effort to compare these differing phrases, and dovetail them together is too cooling for the fervid spirit of the orator. He may at a coming moment apply the quarter-inch measure to the red hot iron, but at this passing moment he must strike with his sledge. Often there scintillated from Dr. Emmons a bright saying which made his audience open their eyes; in itself it was clear, but in its relations it was "dark with excess of bright." Here was one source of his electrifying power. The justness of these criticisms will perhaps be "*made to appear*," from the following illustrations.

*Remarks of Emmons on the Mysteries of the Bible.*—In one of his discourses he teaches that "the nature and perfections of God surpass the comprehension of all minds but his own." In a second sermon he teaches that "there are but two real mysteries in the Gospel, and these are the doctrine of the blessed Trinity and the doctrine of the incarnation of Christ." "There are no other doctrines which are mysterious and incomprehensible by mankind." In a third sermon he teaches that "the

Digitized by Google

first principles of the oracles of God [among which he specifies the principle of three equally divine Persons in one Being] are plain and level to the lowest capacity."[1]

These are plain propositions in themselves; but in their relations to each other they are startling and perplexing. They cannot be understood so as to be reconciled without intricate study.

In his first sermon, the earnest preacher aimed to penetrate our minds with the power of mystery; and he therefore teaches that all the doctrines pertaining to God involve, as *connected* with them but not as *forming* them, many incomprehensible facts.

In his second discourse, the same fervid thinker aims to impress on his hearers the truth, that a devoutly religious heart is a guide to clear intellectual views, and he therefore surprises us with the thought that, although the doctrines pertaining to God *involve*, as *connected* with them, many incomprehensible facts, yet there are only two doctrines which *contain* as *parts* of them such unintelligible facts.

In his third sermon, the zealous reasoner aims to cherish in his hearers a love for the sincere *milk* of the word,[2] and he therefore startles us with the announcement that the doctrine of the Trinity, as well as every other essential doctrine of the Gospel, is "as easy to be understood by the weakest mind as milk is to be digested by the weakest stomach;" but this announcement has reference to the doctrine so far forth as it *claims* to be believed, so far forth as it can be made an object of thought or faith, and not so far forth as it *implies* some truths which, instead of constituting the doctrine, are merely *connected with* it, and as it contains some truths which, being superior to our apprehension, are not presented as demanding our assent. The impetuous logician does not stop to specify his qualifications; he has intimated them elsewhere; and now he does not linger away from his one grand design, in order to adjust what he has already adjusted in other places. "He contradicts himself," men say, but they make this charge because they misapprehend him to be one of those tedious writers, who qualify so as to make all the relations of a truth plain, and then leave the truth itself unimpressive.

*Remarks of Emmons on Certainty and Necessity.* — The decree of God, he affirms, makes things certain; "the agency of God makes things not only *certain* but *necessary*."[3] Does then the agency of God make our free choices not only certain but necessary? Can it be replied, that it makes our free

[1] See Original Edition of Collected Works, Vols. I. pp. 76, 143; V. p. 190.
[2] See pp. 294, 295, above.
[3] Emmons's Works, Vol. II. pp. 329, 330.

Digitized by Google

choices *morally* necessary? But Emmons teaches that *moral necessity* is nothing more nor less than *certainty;* and can he here mean that the agency of God makes our free choices not only morally necessary but also morally necessary; not only certain but also certain?

What, then, does he mean by the word *necessary* as distinct from, and more than, the word *certain*? He uses the term in the same sense in which President Edwards[1] uses it, when he says that necessity sometimes denotes *that* certainty which results from the fact that a thing "is already come to pass, and either *now is* or has been." Emmons, therefore, means to assert, that the decrees of God make our free choices certain, and the agency of God causes them to be facts. They are more than certain then in the sense that the event, the historical reality, has made them *unalterable.* "The existence," says Edwards, "of whatever is already come to pass, is now become necessary." All this is true. Emmons has expressed the truth emphatically. But has he expressed it so plainly, that in some relations of the truth it is easily understood?

*The style of Emmons with regard to the repulsive doctrines of Calvinism.* — As he was perspicuous in the sense of vividly expressing a particular relation of a doctrine, so he was eminently perspicuous in the sense of distinctly expressing those relations of a doctrine which are most unwelcome to the unrenewed mind. No man ever felt a deeper obligation than he, to avoid all such ambiguous phrases as might possibly blunt the sharp points of truth. He was a *plain preacher*, in the sense of abounding with "*plain talk*" on the obnoxious features of the Gospel. He would not be misunderstood with regard to these. He would not daub them over with untempered mortar. An open-hearted honesty characterized him here as everywhere. "There is," he says, "a dignity in transparency, which universally commands esteem. But there is a meanness which wants a name, in a minister's flying to shelters or subterfuges to hide himself from the public eye." This meanness would have been the last of his faults. He chose to conceal nothing, to know the worst. He disliked all ambages and circumgyrations, and dreaded to be even suspected of cunning. "Of all animals," he said, "I do most heartily detest a fox." He saw, for example, that some divines adopted a system of moral agency, which, when pursued to its ultimatum, refers the existence of sin to the will of Heaven. But these writers adopt circumlocutory language in explaining the origin of moral evil, and leave the divine causation to be a matter of inference. They are reluctant to march up on a straight line to the avowal, that God makes peace and

[1] On the Will, Part 1, Sect. III.



Digitized by Google

creates evil. Dr. Emmons is for the straight line. "I believe, and therefore speak," was his motto; and lest he should be suspected of *covering up* something, of not fully exposing the hardest of his doctrine, he selects language which will not bear a construction milder than the true one. If he is to be mistaken by others, he chooses to be mistaken for the worse rather than for the better. If he is to be thought a hypocrite, he prefers to lose rather than gain by his hypocrisy. This fondness for proclaiming the whole truth, this dread of ever seeming to shun an inference, especially an unpopular one, induced him to say, "God stood by the criminal, and moved him to the crime." Calvinists have been often accused of believing that God is the cause of sin. Some of their theological systems repel this charge, because, in a very important sense, God is not the cause of sin. But the Franklin divine, though he believes that in the important sense above referred to, God does not originate moral evil, yet believes, that in another sense he does originate it; that he is the universal cause; and therefore the outspoken preacher does not hesitate to say that the universal cause is the cause of that particular effect which we call *sin*. He moves straight forward, and boldly adopts some of the very phrases [1] which have been disowned as slanders by what he would term *Calvinistical* divines. He might have expressed his theory in language which would have excited no unusual popular odium; but he shrunk, with the sensitiveness of a cavalier, from the least appearance of cringing for the favor of men. He never seemed to have learned the old fable:

> "Sed tacitus pasci si posset corvus, haberet
> Plus dapis et rixae multo minus invidiaeque."

If, now, the question be asked, whether this frank writer has been perspicuous in explaining his theory of the causation of sin, we reply, that he has been plain in letting out the worst of it, in keeping back no part of it which is offensive to the enemies of Calvinism; but he has been less transparent in displaying those lineaments of it, which illustrate the comprehensiveness of his own views, and which are agreeable to the philosophical inquirer after second causes. Here as elsewhere in his zeal for Calvinism his "vaulting" honesty "o'erleaps itself," not so far that his meaning cannot be discerned, but so far that in order to ascertain his full meaning we must patiently compare his detached and antithetic words.

A similar remark may be made with regard to the *proportions* of his general system of theology. He is so faithful to Calvinism, which he heartily

[1] The writer of this Memoir once made, but now recalls, the statement, that Emmons declared God to be "the author of sin." Emmons neither used nor tolerated this phrase.

Digitized by Google

believes to be Paulism, that he must unfold its distinctive truths; they are so often assailed that he must as often defend them; they are so fitted to rouse the indignation of an unhumbled mind, that he must so much the more frequently set them out in bold relief. He does this, as he benevolently says, in order that he may "give men an opportunity of knowing whether they love or hate their Creator." He treats his beloved doctrines, as he would treat beloved children. He would lavish the greater attention upon the child that was the more flagrantly abused; not because he esteemed that child more highly than the others, but because he deemed especial attention to be the more necessary for it. His honest nature and his intense desire to make men see the most humiliating truths, induce him to hold up these truths more prominently than he would if they were not unpopular. Hence he is often said to make them disproportionately conspicuous. They are more conspicuous in his *published* sermons, than in the entire range of those which remain unpublished. It must be confessed, that in his printed volumes he is so plain spoken on the side of faithfulness in making known "the offence of the cross," that he leaves himself liable to be misunderstood on the side of giving to *every* truth that degree of prominence which he really accorded to it. He is often misapprehended in regard to his estimate of the relative value of doctrines, because he is not so plain in magnifying the importance of welcome as of unwelcome realities.

*Remarks of Emmons on the Essential Doctrines of Religion.* — Was he a Catholic divine? The liberal clergy of New England bestowed upon him peculiar honor, and especially lauded his frankness and his catholicism. Other men, however, have condemned him as bigoted and exclusive. They have quoted such remarks as the following in illustration of his narrow spirit:

"Those who are ignorant of the essential doctrines of the gospel, cannot give credible evidence to others that they are real Christians, or subjects of saving grace."

"No man was a more bitter and open enemy to the essential doctrines of the gospel than Mr. Wesley. This I assert not from hearsay, but from his own words which he published and I have read. Yet he was esteemed by multitudes as a most eminently devout and pious Christian."

In citing passages like these, men forget that he elsewhere explains them by concessions like the following:

"Though some Christians complain of some of the conditions of salvation, yet they virtually approve of them, in asking for mercy in a proper manner, and we may charitably hope that some in these [Arminian, Antinomian, Unitarian, and Universalist] denominations do not *understandingly* believe their own schemes, nor *understandingly* disbelieve the disinterested doctrines of the gospel."

Digitized by Google

An Installation Sermon of Emmons on Hebrews 13: 9, has been vehemently condemned as illiberal, by men who do not recognize his tendency to use nervous phrases that sharpen a particular point of doctrine while they do not illumine certain other points. The preacher to be installed was a forceful man, and one of rare promise. But he was suspected by Emmons of having certain erratic tendencies in speculation. The suspicions were subsequently verified. The powerful man became at last a Swedenborgian. With his far-reaching forecast, and his *timely* discrimination, Emmons took for his text the words: "Be not *carried about* with divers and *strange* doctrines: for it is a good thing that the heart be *established* with grace." His soul was aglow with the importance of an *established* faith, that would stand unshaken when the floods came. The following is a sketch of the sermon:

Having enumerated as the *essential* principles of this faith, the doctrines of moral depravity, regeneration, saints' perseverance, the atonement, the Trinity, election, and decrees, Emmons remarks: Good men not only may be, but must be, "established in these doctrines." "All Christians — not only think but know experimentally and certainly that the essential doctrines of the gospel are true, and this knowledge must establish them in the truth. When men know any thing to be true, they cannot divest themselves of that knowledge at their pleasure, but are morally obliged to retain it." — "All the subjects of grace see and feel that their eternal interests are suspended upon their believing and loving the essential doctrines of the gospel; and therefore, they can no more be moved to disbelieve, deny, and give up these doctrines, than they can be moved to give up the salvation of their souls." Such words as these appear to imply, that whoever is truly regenerate must believe the seven doctrines which have been specified as absolutely essential to the gospel, and that whoever does not believe these seven doctrines cannot be saved. Yet this odious tenet is not fairly attributable to the preacher. For he expressly affirms in the discourse:

"Some doctrines may be called essential, because they constitute the essence of the gospel, and are necessary to its very existence; and some may be called essential, because they must be believed and embraced, in order to salvation."

Emmons also affirms, that the seven truths which he specifies in the sermon are essential in the former sense, and may not be in the latter. He adds: "Though all these doctrines are equally fundamental to the Gospel, yet they may not all be equally essential to salvation. For many persons may not understand all these doctrines, nor discern their inseparable connection,[1] but yet may understand, believe, and love some of them, while they are ignorant of others; and this ignorance may be consistent with their final salvation. It is not, however, to my present purpose to say what doctrines a man must believe in order to be saved, but only to point out what are fundamental to the gospel, and necessary to its very existence."

The real idea, then, of this misapprehended sermon is: "Every

[1] When this intense writer says, in another discourse (Works, Vol. II. p. 402): "It is absolutely necessary to approve of the doctrine of reprobation, in order to be saved," he does not *plainly* announce, although he doubtless means to recognize, the *condition*, that the doctrine is fully understood in itself and in its adjuncts.

Digitized by Google

good man, so far forth as he is enlightened by the Holy Ghost, believes the seven doctrines here enumerated: it is *the normal tendency* of true religion to induce this faith in them; they must be lovingly received in the *complete*, if not in the *inchoate* development of the divine life; the want of belief in them is a concomitant, a cause, and an effect of a proportionate want of piety; a full belief in them is eminently congenial with a full-grown virtue, while there may be real goodness in the soul that cherishes one of them and is too imperfect to discern the truth of the others.

If the *intent* of Dr. Emmons had been, in this discourse, to make his utterances quadrate with Christian catholicism, he would have multiplied definitive classes; he would have thrown in the checks and balances. But his aim was to make a strong impression on a strong man; to put an intelligent people on their guard against any possible aberration of their energetic pastor. He did not stop to tythe mint, anise, and cummin. He was sedulous to cut up the very roots of a stout error, and he could not stay his broad axe just then, to split a hair. His decisive words made the desired impress on his auditory. They did not stir up the parish to suspect the new minister, but they were remembered; and when the Swedenborgian mysticism had begun to infect the shepherd, these words were a cordon of fire around the flock, and saved them from the contagion. That minister who wore the three-cornered hat understood better than he has been supposed to understand, that no captain ever gained a battle by merely the delicate scales for weighing powder; that no fortress was ever exploded by the simple niceties of calculation with regard to the thickness of a bomb-shell. "Boldness," said Napoleon, "is often wisdom." General Jackson once made the rash remark, that "there is policy in rashness."

*Emmons's distinction between the* FUNDAMENTAL *and the less* ESSENTIAL *Doctrines of the Gospel.*—His attachment to all the truths of theology was so intense, that he was disposed to exalt every one of them when it was in his immediate view. As long as he looked at it, he saw no end of its value. Thus, when he speaks of the Trinity, he makes an impression on his cursory readers, that this doctrine is the fundamental one of the Gospel. When he speaks of our *Total*, or of our *Native* Depravity, he makes us believe, for the time, that this truth is the very basis of the evangelical system. When he speaks of the Divine Decrees, he is so enamoured of the doctrine, that he seems to regard it as the foundation of nearly all others. When he speaks of certain ethical principles, he appears to regard each of them as the corner-stone of the



Digitized by Google

edifice, which without them becomes a heap of rubbish. His expressions with regard to all these truths are *plain*, as signs of his hearty love to them.

But the superficial reader *will have* it, that they are plain in only one respect; they involve a plain contradiction. Emmons, however, is too rapid for his critics. He *implies* more than they *perceive*. He *assumes* what they have not had time to *grant*. He *tacitly* but not *plainly* intimates, that in its *subjective* relations to the atonement the doctrine of our native depravity is more fundamental than any other; but in its *objective* relations to the atonement, the doctrine of the Trinity is more fundamental than any other. Here is no contradiction. Here is a deep truth.

Again, Emmons has so clear an insight of the logical relation between different articles of faith, that he first represents various truths as depending on a certain one, and afterward he represents that one truth as depending on each of the others. Each is *a* fundamental doctrine; and in a particular juxtaposition each is *the* fundamental doctrine. A hexagon may rest upon either of its six sides. Penetrated with a conviction, that the truth which he may be now considering is essential to the integrity of the system, he speaks as if this single truth were the deepest groundwork of the system, and he does not stop to inquire whether he is not multiplying foundations until he will leave nothing for a superstructure. He has been condemned for distinguishing *too many* doctrines as the basis of the gospel. He specifies here seven, and there nine, of these doctrines as thus fundamental.[1] But his critics forget that he regards one of the essential doctrines as *involving* the others, and therefore he intimates, more sagaciously than perspicuously, that this one doctrine, *if contrasted with others which differ from it in importance*, is superior to them. He has been condemned for extravagance in exalting the metaphysical tenets of Calvinism into the rank of primary truths. But is he extravagant in thus upraising the doctrine of decrees, after he has represented it as comprehending the prophecies, the atonement, the regeneration, sanctification, final perseverance, and salvation of the elect, the eternal punishment of the wicked, the whole government, and even the entire character of Jehovah?[2]

Still again, this rapid thinker, more certainly than plainly, preserves a distinction between a *higher* and a *lower* sense of the word, *foundation*; also between a more *obvious* and a more *hidden importance*. Thus he affirms of the Trinity: "The gospel is so *absolutely* and *obviously* founded on" it, "that whoever denies this great and fundamental truth, must,

[1] See pp. 294, 304, above.
[2] Works, II. pp. 335–340.

Digitized by Google

in order to be consistent, deny all the peculiarities which distinguish revealed from natural religion." "This doctrine is a fundamental doctrine of the gospel, *in the highest sense of fundamental.*"[1]

Once more, Emmons distinguishes, *justly* rather than *clearly*, between a *fundamental* doctrine and a *central* doctrine. The Atonement has the Trinity for its objective foundation, and the Native Depravity of man for its subjective foundation, but the Atonement is raised above these truths, and is at the same time the basis of other truths, so that we may fitly call it *central.* The ardent theologian has been reproached by men who misunderstand him, for not giving sufficient prominence to the atonement; but he declares over and over and over, that Jehovah "gives the *brightest* display of his goodness as well as of his power and wisdom, in the work of redemption;" that ministers ought "to make Christ the *primary* subject," "the *main* subject of their preaching;" that "the doctrine of atonement is the *most* essential *and* peculiar principle of Christianity," for all other principles centre in it. The doctrines of *Native* and *Total* Depravity are prized as the ground stones on which the atonement rests. But the edifice is *costlier* than the stones which underlie it. The doctrine of justification by faith, is the tower which rises above, and forms the crown of, the atonement. The central truth of the Gospel is sustained by some, and it sustains other, truths.

In these and various other ways, may Emmons be acquitted from the charge of contradicting himself; but his acquittal is purchased at the expense of an immaculate reputation for perspicuity. He is one of the great men who have been dishonored through their very fame. His fame has been that of a clear, rather than that of an earnest writer. But his *love* of truth was as intense, as his *perception* of it was vivid. His spirit was so fervid, that his phrases are often too brief. *Semper festinat ad eventum.* The Princeton Review has caught a glimpse of this peculiarity in Emmons. It affirms:[2] "His intrepidity in the assertion of the most startling and odious of his dogmas is perhaps the grand secret of his strength; he saves time by it; he saves the multiplied explanations and ambrages of the New Haven School." These words of the Reviewer are like those of Dr. Emmons, in one respect. They are *decisive.* They are *ardent.* They *save time.* In asserting one truth, they may leave one wrong impression.

Having made these criticisms on the perspicuity of the Franklin preacher, let us proceed to a new theme.

[1] Works, II. pp. 143, 153.
[2] Vol. XIV. p. 532.

Digitized by Google

6.—EMMONS WAS A POINTED PREACHER.

To preach *plainly* often means to preach *pointedly*. The natural frankness of Emmons aided him in making his discourses *pertinent* to the condition of individuals. He says more than once, that the preacher "who means to *penetrate* and impress the minds of his hearers, will be very *particular* in the application of his discourses." In characterizing certain pulpit orators he has remarked, "They make the truth *shine*, but do not make it *pinch*." One of his most noted sermons was from the text, "The words of the wise are as *goads*." "The preacher is aiming at me," was a very common exclamation of his auditors. He would have been a more popular divine, if he had discoursed about *generic* sin, but he punctured men with the charge of their own *personal* sin. Hearers would have been more amused with him, if he had talked on their transgression committed six thousand years ago; but he would not thus divert them from their *present* individual transgression. He would have smoothed the edge of his appeals if he had spoken of sin as a passive state, as a mere liability, as something imputed, not actual; but when he *said* sin, he meant *Sin*, that horrible act for which every one of his hearers was *then* deserving of everlasting death. He did not trifle with abstractions. He did not charm his hearers with grotesque generalizations. He thrust upon them, and into them, the accusation of the very iniquity which they were committing while he was yet speaking.

It has been often surmised that he discoursed so much on the general doctrines of revelation, as to render it needful for him to glide over the practical details of life. But his sermons are not monotonous treatises on a few abstract dogmas. They are diversified with commendations of all the virtues, and sharp censures of all the vices. They not only specify the *common* offences against moral law, but they pointedly condemn, under their own names, lotteries, card-playing, dancing, tavern-haunting, fondness for dress, eagerness to obtain clothing manufactured in foreign lands, straggling over the road or fields on the Sabbath day. Was he a "mere metaphysician," a theological abstraction? "What mean," he asks from the pulpit, "what mean the prancing of horses, the rattle of carriages, the passing and repassing of travellers before and after public worship? What mean the circles round the house of God after public services are ended?" His maxim was: "Christ never drew a bow *at a venture*, but always *directed* the arrows of truth to the *hearts* of *his* hearers." There was doubtless a fluttering among his auditors, when Emmons remarked from his pulpit: "Prodigality reigns among us in every form, and in every place, *covering the heads* of rich and poor with the *feathers* of folly and pride." "The youth in *this* place

Digitized by Google

are not so much governed in their fashions by the example of *other* places, as by the example of a *few* in this. If this *few* therefore would set a good example in this respect, they would easily bring into discredit and disuse many *superfluities* and *fopperies of dress*, which begin to increase and prevail."

The dexterity with which Emmons applies his great doctrines to the minute affairs of life, is often surprising. Does a juggler and fortune-teller straggle into the neighborhood of Franklin? The parishioners have a sermon which points out the distinction between decree and fate, also between the secret and the revealed will of God; proves that the divine purposes are not a rule for our duty, and are not in conflict with the divine law; aims to solve the apparent contradiction between the decree that insures the certainty of sinning and the command that forbids the act of sinning, also between the predestined certainty and the entire freeness of the act; and in the midst of all these high discussions the "Inference" comes: "If God's secret will respects the taking place of future events, then all uninspired men who pretend to reveal God's secret will, *or to foretell future events*, are guilty of both folly and falsehood." They "ought to be *avoided, despised*, and condemned." The first three sentences of this recondite sermon, illustrate the aptness of Emmons in exciting the curiosity of his hearers. The young men whom the strolling fortune-teller would entice from their field labors, were led to anticipate some "*Improvement*" from these opening words:—"It is a mark of the moral depravity of mankind, that they are generally more inquisitive to know their *fortune*, than to know their *duty*. They are much more solicitous to know what God *intends*, than what he *requires*. He has told them their duty, which they do *not desire* to know; but he has not told them their fortune, which they *are fond* of being told."

### 7.—He developed the harmony of doctrine.

"I have spent the greater part of my time in making joints." Unless we remember this remark of Emmons, we shall derive a false idea from some of the preceding Sections. Perhaps he was more distinguished for his aptness in unfolding the connection of truths, than for his daring in the utterance of pointed words. One of his discourses would startle the whole town, and bring out a large audience to hear another discourse, that should be the correlative and counterpart of the first. The second sermon would be equally bold and positive, and would arouse the curiosity of his hearers to understand how two trains of thought apparently so dissimilar, could be reconciled with each other. A third sermon would unfold the consistency between truths which before seemed antagonistic. The three

Digitized by Google

discourses, all equally novel, would excite and retain for three weeks the deep interest of his parishioners, who would then be directed, in a similar method, to three other trains of thought, equally distinct and equally stimulating. Some preachers, he remarks, "not only contradict in one discourse, what they have said in another, but they say and unsay, assert and deny the same things in the same discourse."[1] He has been blamed for holding up one doctrine so high that it seemed to conflict with another doctrine, which had previously been raised into bold relief. But he was careful to reconcile in a distinct sermon, the statements which had appeared successively prominent, and mutually antagonistic. The following is the substance of a colloquy which he conducted twice at least, perhaps oftener, with more than one inquisitive parishioner:

"Mr. Emmons, did you not contradict yourself in your last discourse?"
"Contradict myself, how? where?"
"Did you not say that *a*, *b*, *c*, was true?"
"Yes; and did I contradict it?"
"Why, sir, you said in a previous sermon that" ——
"Ah, you mean, do you, that in my last sermon I contradicted what I had said in my sermon *before* the last?"
"Yes, sir, that is what I mean."
"You do not mean, then, that I contradicted myself in one and the same discourse?"
"No, sir."
"Oh, that is a different thing. Come to meeting next Sabbath."

And the next Sabbath would develop the harmony which the careful preacher deemed it unmeet to unfold in the private colloquy. Thus did he quicken the interest of his auditors in the relation of truths to each other. His habitual aim was, to excite among his people a thirst for knowledge. He reiterated his maxim, "A desire to learn divine truth always accompanies a good capacity and a good heart."

This development of the connection between doctrines each of which had been presented in a vigorous and positive style, gave to the Franklin preacher a popularity among those who knew him, which he did not possess among strangers. Hearing him occasionally, the strangers were sometimes repelled by his bold, stern Calvinism. Hearing him regularly, and revering his mental and moral worth, his friends were stimulated to look out for some future reconciliation of apparent paradoxes. Sparks of light would come from the conflicting statements. Professor Pond, of Bangor, writes: "Emmons was one of those preachers respecting whom no one could be indifferent. His friends greatly loved and honored him, and his enemies as intensely disliked him. There was scarcely a congre-

[1] See Dr. Balch's remark, p. 194, above.

Digitized by Google

gation within the circle of his exchanges, in which there were not some two or three who would take their hats and make for the door, as soon as they saw him enter the house. Still, the house, as a general thing, was fuller than ordinary, when it was known beforehand that he was to preach."

### 8. — The originality and ingenuity of Emmons.

"I fully agree with the remark made to me some years since by Dr. [Lyman] Beecher, that no man in our country has thought more on the subject of theology than Dr. Emmons." — *Letter of Rev. Joel Hawes, D. D.*

"The man cannot be named whom Emmons followed, either in doctrine, or style, or manner. He was *himself*, in every respect, and nobody else." — *Dr. Ide.*

As the Franklin recluse did his own thinking, he *was* original even when he does not *appear* so. He is an *independent* witness for the Bible. His ingenuity was involved in his originality. It is conspicuous in such sermons as "The Excuse of Sinners their Condemnation," and in minor reasoning processes like the following:

*Prayer has an actual, positive influence in persuading the Deity to grant a favor.* — "If prayers did not really operate as means in procuring divine favors, then it would be as proper to pray for divine blessings *after* they are granted, as *before*. But this we all know to be absurd. Suppose a good man hears that his friend at a distance is dangerously sick; it is certainly proper that he should pray for his life. But supposing he is credibly informed, a few weeks after, that his friend is entirely restored to health; it is certainly improper that he should continue to pray for the removal of his sickness. The reason is, while his friend was sick, his prayers might be the means of procuring his recovery; but after that event had actually taken place, his prayers could no longer operate as means of bringing it to pass. Hence it appears, that the immutability of the divine purposes, instead of *destroying*, actually *establishes*, the necessity and prevalence of prayer."

*It is wrong to punish men for the sins of their progenitor.* — "We know it is not right that a present generation should be punished for the sins of a future generation. What possible guilt can the present generation derive from a future generation? Suppose God now knows all the sins that the next generation after this shall commit; and suppose he now knows that their sins will be enormously great; and suppose they shall surpass in number and guilt, the sins of all former generations; can this knowledge of the next generation justify God in punishing us for their sins? How can God justly punish us for the sins of a generation that are gone from the stage of life, any more than he can justly punish us for the sins of a generation that have not yet come upon the stage of life?"

*The final separation of the wicked from the righteous does not prove that God is a respecter of persons.* — "It is said, 'If God should save some of mankind and finally punish others, then he would be a respecter of persons.' To this it is sufficient to reply, that

Digitized by Google

divine inspiration assures us that God's rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked, is the very thing which demonstrates him to be *no* respecter of persons. 'But if ye call on the Father, who, *without respect of persons judgeth* according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.' 1 Pet. 1: 17. . . . . 'But he that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done; *and there is no respect of persons.*' Coloss. 3: 23–25. And the apostle tells the finally impenitent sinner, that 'God will render to every man according to his deeds,' . . . . '*For there is no respect of persons with God.*' Rom. 2: 6–11."

*All believers in the Bible must believe in Universal Salvation, or else in Total Depravity.* — Some Universalists "deny, that there is any essential distinction between saints and sinners in this life. They hold, that all men are partly bad and partly good, and that none are totally depraved. If they can prove this, it is granted, that they can fairly infer from it that all men will be saved. For the gospel does certainly promise eternal life to all who truly love God, repent of sin, and believe in Christ, or have the least degree of saving grace."

### 9. — His childlike statements.

The ingenuity of Emmons has been commended so often, that many regard him as a mere intellectual gymnast. In order to catch the ear of children, he never, like John Wesley, composed an entire discourse in words of one syllable. He is one of the last men who would be called a "Children's Preacher." He aimed, however, to give "their portion in due season," to the young as well as the old. Regarding him as a mere dry metaphysician, his readers smile at some of his sentences, and pronounce them more juvenile than philosophical. But such readers forget, that these sentences were written for the purpose of bringing down high truths to the comprehension of the youngest listeners. The second sentence of his sermon on the Primitive Rectitude of Adam, is: "No parent, perhaps, has ever been treated with so little propriety and respect, as Adam." Would not every small ploughboy "prick up his predestinating ears," when he was startled with this homelike item of history? He would soon find himself in the midst of a discussion on the power of one being, to create the holiness of another. In order to prove that conscience is a distinct faculty of the mind, Emmons remarks that "conscience is seated in the *breast.*" "It is *here* [in the breast that] we feel pleasure or pain whenever we are approved or condemned by *conscience.* But when we freely employ the powers of *perception, reason,* and *memory,* we find it is the *head,* which is either agreeably or disagreeably affected." This argument provokes a derisive laugh from critics, who do not consider that the *substance* of the argument is manly, while only the *form* of it is childlike; and this simple form was chosen because it was most fitted to interest the ploughboy and the dairy maid,

Digitized by Google

who were stimulated to intellectual researches by such kindly accommodations to their need. This very argument once arrested the attention of a boy only twelve years old, aroused his enthusiasm in the study of Mental Science, and made on him a life-long impression that the Moral Faculty is the most peculiar, the most energetic, and the most authoritative of all the soul's powers.

Hundreds of artless, nursery phrases like the following, are specimens of his condescension to children:

"The greatest travellers and navigators, for the time being, are not half so well acquainted with the world and the inhabitants of the world, as the angels are, who are very numerous, very intelligent, and very attentive observers of all that they see and hear while traversing Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. Though every individual angel may not take the circuit of the whole world, yet some or other of them are continually making their excursions through all the nations and regions of the earth.—They must visit all the cities, all the courts, all the armies, and all the navies in the four quarters of the globe, and all other places and persons."

"Many, if not all, of the angels in heaven, have actually been in this world, at different times and on different occasions; and there is no time when they are all absent from this place of their destination."

"They have understood the origin, nature, extent, and consequences of the scheme of redemption for nearly six thousand years, though it was not so early or generally known in this world."

"The living have sometimes requested the dead, before they left the earth, to break over this barrier [between the two worlds] and appear to them again; and they have engaged to do it, if it should be in their power."

"By hearing this, or some other discourse in which Christ condemned the self-righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, Nicodemus, a Pharisee and ruler of the Jews, was led to desire a private interview with him, for the sake of gaining more light upon some subject which labored in his mind. This was probably the subject of regeneration, though he did not expressly mention it."

How could Abraham know that God spake to him, as God is said to have spoken in Genesis 22: 8? "Abraham was under peculiar advantages to know the voice of God, who had frequently appeared to him and conversed with him before. If this had been the first time that God had spoken to him, he might not have known his voice. Samuel did not know the voice of God, the first time he spake to him. But Abraham was an old prophet. We have an account of God's speaking to him no less than six times before this."

### 10.—The pertinence of his discourses.

*Each of his sermons was fitted to some peculiar exigency of some of his hearers.* Those who have best known the timeliness of his discourses, have most admired his skill in adapting them to their specific end. Not in all, but in many respects, his style is singularly pertinent to his theme. We fail to notice the appropriateness of his words, because they flow so easily. They cannot be fully understood unless they be *studied*, and



Digitized by Google

they are apparently too simple to require, or to reward a toilsome investigation. Scores of illustrations like the following may be gleaned from his discourses:

*His Sermon on the Preacher's Aim.* — We are somewhat surprised when we hear an abstract metaphysician declare, that 'hearers always *feel* when the preacher *hits* them; and he always *hits* them when he describes their character.' Why does Emmons employ this *striking* phraseology? His text is: "The words of the wise are as *goads*." The sermon, therefore, must be *sharpened* with phrases *pointed* like the text. Hence, the title of the sermon is: "The *aim* of a wise preacher;" and we are told that the wise preacher "will *handle* the *sword* of the Spirit, which is the word of God, with skill and *dexterity*, and *strike* every hearer in the most *tender* and *vulnerable* part." The feelings of the author are so quickened by his theme, that the most ordinary current of his language is affected by it, and we read such words as these on almost every page: "*penetrate*," "*impress*," "*fasten*," "*clinch*," "*pierce*," "*direct*," "*wound*," "*probe*," "*soothe*," "*stupefy*," "*bow*," "*subdue*," "*pungency*," "*spear*," "*nail*," "*flaw*," "*surgeon*," "*force*," "*bright*," "*sharp*," "*keen*," "*pointed*," "*defenceless*," "*searching*," "*smoother than oil*," "*naked truth*," etc., etc.

*His Sermon on Walking with God.* — The text is, "And Enoch walked with God," etc. Therefore, the style of the discourse moves onward in phrases like the following: "Those who *walk* with God *view his hand*," "saints *walk together*," "are *companions*," "*come out* from the world," "*follow* Christ," "walk worthy of their vocation." "God keeps those who *walk with him, in the hollow of his hand*," "*spreads the wing* of his protection over them;" "they enjoy the *light of his countenance*," "*approach unto* God," "*draw nigh* to God," "have *eyes to see him, ears to hear* him." They are "*pilgrims*" and "*strangers*" on the earth, have "*waited* in the *way*" of the divine judgments, are comforted by the *rod and staff* of the shepherd, will enjoy "eternal rest.' Some "are *led* astray from God," "*depart* from him, *deviate* from the *path* of rectitude," "*go back*," "*walk in* darkness." "God hides his face from those who *wander* from him." "Satan can be made to *flee*," etc., etc.

*His Sermon on Spiritual Darkness.* — From the text: "The way of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble," we find a discourse shaded with words like these: The "wicked *walk in darkness*," "in *crooked* paths," are "*insensible* to objects leading to ruin," are "*blind* to the moral beauty of God," are "*groping* at noonday," have "*darkness* in the daytime," "*grope* for the wall," "*grope* as if they had no eyes," "have their understandings darkened," "*stumble* at noonday," "*stumble* over each other," "*stumble* over their religious duties," "*stumble* over their own hearts;" "no *light* which men can exhibit will prevent the sinner from *stumbling*;" "they run into *false* ways," have not "a *gleam* of hope," "Satan *blinds* their minds," "leads them *blindfold* to destruction," "they say, the Lord *seeth* not," "their *way* is *dark* and slippery," "their body is full of *darkness*," they have a "selfish *eye*," "the universe is *dark* to them and mysterious," their table is "a *snare* and trap," "their *path* is as the *setting sun* which withdraws every *beam* of *light* from the *eye*," they "will *close their eyes* in everlasting *darkness*," "in *blackness and darkness* forever;" "God involves them in *total darkness* and ruin," gives them "*a spirit of slumber*;" "they *fall*," "*clouds and darkness* gather around their *path*," "they *must* see God's truth;" "the

Digitized by Google

Bible *points out* the *way to* heaven;" "the *light* of the body is the *eye;*" "a good eye lets in *natural light*, a good heart lets in *moral light;*" good men "extend their *views* into eternity;" "God causes the *light to shine* out of *darkness*," "to *shine into men's hearts* and give them the *light of the* knowledge of his *glory* in the *face of* Jesus Christ;" "*marvellous light*," "*perfect day*." "*Look, ye blind*, that ye may *see;*" "bring forth the *blind* that have eyes," etc., etc.

*His Sermon on the Final Harvest.*—This is redolent of the good seed found in the Parable of the Sower: "God's *seed time* may continue thousands of years," he "*will* have a *harvest*," he "*must* have a time to *reap* as well as to *sow*," "his *laborers* are *sowing* in his *field*," "he *employs* men and angels as *laborers* in his *vineyard*, and *instruments* in his *hand*," his "angels guarded the tree of life," "he will *reap* the *fruits* of *their labors*," "they are his *servants*," they "do the *work* which he gave them to *do*," "he *employed* Romans, Grecians, Babylonians, etc., to *labor* for the coming of Christ;" —"from these worldly laborers he will *reap* a *rich harvest*," they, too, will "*eat the fruit of their doings*;"—he will reap the *fruits* of the labors of Jesus Christ, who "went into his father's *vineyard*," and was "a faithful and *laborious servant*," more so than any other man who ever "*went* voluntarily into his *father's field*;" after finishing his painful labors, Christ will *exhibit* the *fruits* of "them before the *eyes* of all creatures;"—the *harvest* will not come until the *end of the world;* neither wheat nor tares will be *mature* till *then;* "all will be *ripe then;*" "God's *harvest* being fully *ripe*, he will *gather it in;*" his "*harvest* will not be *blasted, or injured* by any *accident;*" "after the judgment God will *rest* from his *labors* and *reap the fruits* of his *works* of creation;" he "has been *laboring* from the *early* days of eternity," "having formed his plan, he *began to labor with his own hand;*" he "will *reap a rich and plentiful harvest* of *knowledge;*" for "men *grow* in knowledge as they grow in years," angels have "been *growing* in knowledge from the day of their creation, but will not come to their *full growth* till they see all intelligent creatures *collected*, and their views, etc., *unfolded;*"—improvements in knowledge are made under divine *cultivation*.—God "will reap a *harvest* of *holiness*" as well as knowledge; this will augment the "*joy* of the harvest," "he might have enjoyed *rest* in contemplating his perfections; he knew how much *care* and *labor* the universe would cause him," but now "his creatures will enjoy his *rich* and *happy harvest*," "his wheat is in a *green* and *imperfect* state, hardly to be distinguished from *tares;*" "all intelligent beings are trying to *ripen* it;" "when good men are *fully ripe*, they can be easily distinguished from bad men;" "*light is sowing* for the righteous;"—"every one gathereth with God or scattereth;" "Israel is an *empty vine* which *bringeth forth fruit* unto himself." "Ye have *sown* much and bring in little," etc., etc.

### 11.—Was Emmons concise or diffuse, exact or indefinite in his style?

"A very rare combination of excellences was found in his [Emmons's] sermons—order, elegance, simplicity, purity, conciseness, clearness, pungency, power. They seem almost equally adapted to the pulpit and the closet; and, as models, should be in the hands of every young preacher."

These are the words of Dr. Ralph Emerson, formerly Professor in the Andover Theological Seminary. There are opponents of Emmons,

Digitized by Google

however, who affirm that, instead of being a concise, he is an eminently diffuse writer. For such antagonistic judgments there must be some reason. One reason is, that in different sermons the Franklin preacher, like every other, reiterates the same idea in different connections, and reclothes the idea in the same old phrases. Hence comes the impression that he employs more words than he needs, in enforcing a single truth. A similar impression is made by the multitudinous speeches of Daniel Webster. If the repetitions were omitted, the bulk of these speeches would be reduced within comparatively narrow lines, yet Webster, while in one point of view diffuse, is in another point of view admirably concise. If Emmons had compressed his sermons into one uniform treatise, they would have gained in compactness, what they would have lost in adaptation to different men at different times.

The theology taught in the works of Emmons, "so far as it is peculiar to a certain school, is more precisely and perfectly exhibited [by these works] than by any other writings; and, so far as it is not peculiar to that school, it is not only defined with admirable exactness, but defended by the soundest, clearest, and strongest logic."

These are the words of Dr. Thomas H. Skinner, now Professor in the Union Theological Seminary, New York. There are opponents of Emmons, however, who affirm that he is indefinite rather than exact in his phraseology. They have some ground for their criticism. In his compression of language, he sometimes crowds into one word, a more expansive meaning than properly belongs to it. He forces so many thoughts into a single phrase, that it becomes more dense than clear, and it is too comprehensive to be precise. Thus, in a sermon developing the superiority of men to animals, he desires to teach that we are distinguished from brutes by our faculties of abstraction and generalization, and of combining in new forms the ideas which we have abstracted and generalized. But instead of perplexing the farmers of his parish by enumerating these three powers, he condenses his nomenclature into one word, and employs the term "imagination" as designating the three.[1] In various instances Dr. Emmons has sacrificed the exactness, to the close and nervous compression,[2] and also to the Biblical forms, of his language. In

[1] Works, Orig. Ed. Vol. VII. pp. 279, 280.

[2] "Two directly opposite doctrines cannot both be true, but *one* must be true and the *other* false." This assertion is correct with regard *to those doctrines which Emmons was considering*, but he did not suppose it to be correct with regard to *all* opposing statements; as, the two statements that no descendant of Adam has died, and all descendants of Adam have died, are *both* false.

"God himself cannot (to speak with reverence) make them [sinners] contented." The highest, purest kind of contentment he cannot give, but Emmons did not mean to teach that Omnipotence cannot give to men *any* kind of contentment.

Digitized by Google

the facile current of his words, however, we are often arrested by the distinctness and precision of his terminology. "In what does sin consist?" This was the question. "Sinning:" this was the reply; and this one word is a memento of his definiteness as well as conciseness. Many of his apothegms in this Memoir exemplify the same rhetorical virtues.

12.—WAS HE A NEAT WRITER?

"The reader of Emmons's sermons is like one passing over an extensive and well-cultivated farm; the fences are substantial and erect; the fields are verdant, square, and regular, not *triangular;* the meadows are separated from the woodlands, and the pastures from the tillage; the mansion house is not lofty, but neat and spacious, and speaks itself the seat of wealth, but not of dissipation—of happiness, but not of ambition. The prospects are diversified with hills and valleys, and enriched with springs and rivulets."—*Rev. Samuel Whelpley's Triangle.*

Signal injustice is done to the Franklin minister by comparing his style with that of Washington Irving and Charles Lamb. It ought to be compared with the style of *clergymen* writing in his own land, and in his own day. In this comparison, his style is peculiar. It is eminent for its freedom from turgid or declamatory paragraphs; from rough, jagged phrases; from all ostentation of learning or depth, of orthodoxy or originality. In this comparison, it is a chaste, neat style. Slovenly sentences may be found in his discourses; yet where is the author of his time and condition who could publish more than three hundred sermons, *without revising one quarter of them for the press,* and exhibit so few clumsy, slouching paragraphs. Thus, in his discourse on the "Necessity of Zeal in maintaining Divine Institutions," he has "*pointed out* the difference between positive and moral duties," in a way which may be called a model for pure concise definition. Hundreds of his sentences may be quoted which dropped from his pen without a moment's premeditation, and yet are what one of his parishioners termed "*uncommonly clean.*" The following are taken almost at random:

"Partiality consists not merely in treating one person differently from another, but in treating one person differently from another *without any reason.*"

"The highest degree of common grace leaves men unwilling to be saved; but the lowest degree of special grace makes them willing."

"As the moral laws of God are founded in the nature of things, so they are immutable; but as the positive laws of God are founded in the relation of things, so they are mutable, and may be abrogated or set aside, when the relation of things requires it."

"'They went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch:'—As the water, no doubt, lay in a valley, so Philip and the eunuch went down to get to it, and went up to get from it. But there is nothing in the text, as it stands in the original,



Digitized by Google

to determine whether either of them went under water. And since we cannot suppose that Philip did, we must suppose the eunuch did not; for the expressions concerning both are precisely the same."

"It is love to the objects injured, and not to the objects punished, that dictates the nature, degree, and duration of their punishment."

### 13. — The dramatic element in Emmons.

His sermons "are all alike; whatever be the subject, there is the same short and easy exordium, the same statement of the proposition, the same brevity of proof, and the same disproportionately prolix improvement." — *Princeton Review*, Vol. XIV. p. 534.

"No man brings out so large a *variety* of truths, and all so rich, as Dr. Emmons. He is without an equal in giving to his hearers, from the beginning to the end of the year, *different* parts of doctrinal and practical divinity." — *Dr. Samuel Spring, of Newburyport.*

These two paragraphs, like the acid and the alkali, can be united in one glass. There *was* a monotony of *method*, and a diversity of *matter* in the Franklin pulpit. The monotony of method, however, was more apparent than real, more on the surface than in the depths of the sermons. The discourses are interspersed with biography, as those on Daniel, Samuel, etc.; with history, as those on the Origin of Man, the Dispersion at Babel, etc.; with psychology, as those on Conscience, the Superiority of Men to Animals, etc.; with Ontology, as those on the Being and Attributes of God; with the Arts, as his discourse on Church Music; with Politics, as his Fast Day sermons; with metaphysical proof, didactic statement, and hortatory appeal, — "Are you secure? *Awake!* Are you alarmed? *Condemn* yourselves, and justify God, and accept of mercy! Stand *no longer* idle!" This is one of the numerous exhortations which broke up the flow of the Franklin sermons.

Is there a dramatic element in these discourses? To affirm that there is, will evoke from some the cry of *paradox*. But the word paradox is so often applied to the works of Emmons, that we can listen to it once more. The staid metaphysician never introduced the dramatic form into his *chirography*. If some of his paragraphs had been penned or printed in this form, their dramatic element would have attracted the eye. The element is not so obvious in his published, as it was in his spoken discourses; still it can be detected on the unbroken, seemingly monotonous page. The logical teacher never descended to buffoonery, or to any histrionic arts that could degrade his ministrations, but he at one time introduces the penitent thief as conversing with his unhumbled comrade: "My fears are alarmed — and have not you reason to fear as well as I;" at another time, he introduces Judas and Paul as engaged in earnest colloquy, the former declaring: "Paul, you and I are perfectly agreed,"

Digitized by Google

etc., the latter responding: "I remember the time when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died," etc.; at one time he introduces the condemned spirit as exclaiming: "Where am I? I am certainly in hell;" "Oh, that I could forget that world, where I first received my existence, and drew my breath;" at other times he introduces Jehovah as uttering familiar words to the children of a day.[1] In such passages as the following, it was impossible for his auditors to overlook his quick sally and brisk retort, which are somewhat concealed unless the style of the printed page be somewhat modified:

I.

*Hearers.* — "But *why* do you attempt to alarm our fears by representing sin as a transgression of the law, and the law as threatening death for every transgression? We have *often* heard all this before, and are prepared to hear it again, without any painful fears and apprehensions."

*Preacher.* — "But perhaps you are mistaken, as thousands of others have been who *were* as stout-hearted as you are *now*. I will mention one instance. It is that of Paul. He was a man of as much knowledge, and as much courage and fortitude as you are. But *he* tells us, that he *could* not stand before the requirements and threatenings of the divine law." — "I think I see, what you have often seen, poor guilty sinners bowed down, hopeless and helpless, in the utmost anguish and distress, crying, What must we do to be saved? And I think I see one and another of you, who are most stout-hearted, sinking down in dismay and despair."

"I ask you: *What is the matter?*" — [You exclaim]

*Hearers.* — "We have sinned against God; we have transgressed his law; we deserve his curse; his dreadful wrath abides upon us; we cannot stand before him; we fall by our own sin and guilt into the endless torments of hell."

II.

*Sinner.* — "What shall I do? My case is deplorable and desperately wretched."

*Preacher.* — "God has *often* told you so, but you would not believe it. Can you *now* believe otherwise? Can you believe that God *has* no secret will? Can you believe that he will not *execute* his secret will? Can you believe that your opposition to his secret will can *frustrate* it? Can you believe that God will *give up* his secret will to gratify your unsubmissive will?" — . . . . [You say]

*Sinner.* — These "are hard sayings. I *hope* they are not true. I will go to the Bible, and see if they are to be found *there*."

*Preacher.* — "I beseech you *to go*, and I venture to say that, if you *do go*, you will return — *converted* or — *condemned*."

### 14. — Emmons was a biblical preacher.

"A better service, it seems to me, could hardly be done for the younger clergy of our day, than to engage them to become familiar with the writings of Dr. Emmons; and private Christians could not read and study them without being edified and established in the truth."

[1] See Works, Orig. Ed. I. 322, 323; III. 305; IV. 296, 538, 539, 540; V. 274, 280, 575, 608, 609, 610; VI. 419, 424; VII. 171; etc.

Digitized by Google

Dr. Hawes, who uttered these words, is no Emmonite in his creed. How, then, could he recommend to *young* clergymen and to ordinary *laymen*, the perusal of writings which discuss the mysteries of theology with more freedom and depth than have been allowed, in any other rural parish than that of Franklin, since the foundation of the world? The divines in Germany are astonished, when they hear of a congregation of farmers listening to sermons on themes which Leibnitz examined with anxious toil.

One reason, probably, why Dr. Hawes commended these sermons to plain men is, their Biblical style. They contain so many *direct* quotations from the sacred volume, as to attract the reverence of unlettered Christians. One of the sermons is enriched with sixty-nine, another with a hundred and eighteen, and many others with a nearly equal number of the inspired verses. The frequency of his references to the historical Scriptures is perhaps unprecedented in the American pulpit. Who has alluded so often as Emmons to Cosbi, Zimri, and Jehonadab? His *indirect* and partial citations from the inspired word are well nigh numberless. Had their author adopted the plan of some old English divines, and italicized the Biblical phrases which he borrowed, his chequered paragraphs would have been unsightly. The very woof of his style is from the version of King James. Thousands of his sentences diversified with no italics or inverted commas, contain tacit references like the following: The finally impenitent, "*reject the counsel of God against themselves*, practically *judge themselves unworthy of eternal life*, and must suffer *the second death* which is the full and proper *wages of sin*." He had read and reperused King James's Bible so often and so carefully, that its words came to him like nimble servitors, and stood waiting for his call. Not seldom do we find a phrase charming us by its grace, but hidden like the Trailing Arbutus among the leaves of a preceding summer; and as we inspect the phrase more narrowly, we find it a choice but concealed quotation. Thus, in describing the circuit of good angels over the earth, and their discovery of the spiritual darkness and drowsiness in which men lie, this Biblical preacher says: "How, then, must [these angels] feel while they see the earth sitting still and at rest!" Here is no parade of familiarity with the prophets, but there is a tacit though thrilling reference to the poetical words of Zechariah (1: 8–11): "*I saw by night*, and behold a man — and he stood among the myrtle trees, — and they answered the angel of the Lord that stood among the myrtle trees, and said, 'We have walked to and fro through the earth, and behold, *all the earth sitteth still and is at rest*.'"

Is it said, that Emmons was not an accomplished interpreter of the Bible? The same may be said of all the American divines who wrote

Digitized by Google

from 1786 until 1810. Is it said that he gives many forced expositions? Not more than are given by the majority of writers who composed their theological systems *when*, or *before* he prepared his discourses. Men have ridiculed the exegesis of Emmons, who have seen nothing ridiculous in the strained interpretations invented by Turretin and Owen. Besides, we are to remember that Emmons quoted the Bible, as the writers of the New Testament quoted from the Old; and we cannot infer from his *accommodations* of the sacred text, that he ascribed to its authors the meaning which he associated with it. It is easy to smile at Dr. J. A. Alexander's translation of Psalm 107: 32: "Let them exalt him [Jehovah] in the congregation of the people, *and in the session of the elders* praise him." But it were unfair to regard the author of this version as intending by it to prove, that the Psalmist was a Presbyterian and an advocate of the Eldership and Session. So it is unfair to regard Emmons as believing in the scientific accuracy of all the forceful rhetorical turns which he gave to the inspired words. He designed to imitate the apostles who made their thoughts the more impressive by saying: "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet." Of a Saturday evening, several young men in his parish were drowned, and only one member of their party was saved. With his wonted quickness Emmons prepared a sermon for the next morning from the text: "*And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*" Did he therefore believe that Job referred to the Franklin casualty? In the same style of vivid accommodation he says:

"Life itself is paramount to all other earthly favors; for were they all taken away but that, that alone would overbalance all the losses and bereavements that could be sustained. Hence the prophet demands, 'Wherefore should a *living* man complain?'"

"Our bodies are called *tabernacles* in allusion to that in the wilderness; and that we know was so framed that every joint and socket and pin could be *taken apart* and *perfectly put together again*. Why, then, should it be thought incredible that God should literally raise the dead at the general resurrection?"

### 15.—Apothegms illustrating his didactic method.

"The audiences who heard Emmons, have heard more truth, and are better instructed, waiving all peculiar and discriminating points, than those who heard Davies or Witherspoon; and trusting that time will cure prejudices, and assured that selfishness will soon yield the ground to a benevolence *purely disinterested*, I frankly declare, that I would as lief be thought the writer of the sermons of Emmons, as of Watts or Baxter, Hall or Fuller, Sherlock or Tillotson, Saurin or Claude, Bossuet or Bourdaloue."

"A sermon is, or ought to be, a portion of the Gospel of Christ, adapted to the attention of a public audience. Its style and manner may be compared to the vessels on which a public feast is served up. Important truth is the food itself. Now, the

Digitized by Google

service of dishes may be of gold, silver, porcelain, or common earthen ware, pewter, or even wood. Some forty years ago, when the good people of this country used to eat on wooden trenchers, even a pewter service was thought quite splendid and luxurious. Emmons treats his audience in a handsome service of silver; and if there are those who can go as high as gold, enriched with diamonds, I am glad. Let it be remembered, however, that very indifferent food may be served up in gold, and many a deadly draught has lurked in a golden goblet." —*Whelpley's Triangle.*

That the discourses of Emmons are instructive has been so commonly admitted, that we need not linger in proving it. We will only illustrate it by the following apothegms, many of which are also specimens of his concise, exact, and neat style.

"The breast of every Christian is a field of battle, where sometimes benevolence and sometimes selfishness gains the victory; but there is no solid peace till benevolence repels and excludes selfishness."

"The heart of the greatest and best sinner in the world is small, mean, and contracted, in comparison with the benevolent, enlarged heart of the least saint on earth."

"Awakened and convinced sinners often imagine that they really seek and strive to come to Christ; but if this were true there would be no occasion of the Father's drawing them to Christ."

"It is more eligible to belong to the race of Adam since his apostacy, than it was before he apostatized. It is more eligible to live in this world, bad as it is, than to have lived in it while it was perfectly holy."

"Let Christians be entreated to improve the opportunities they enjoy, to get and to do good in this world, where there is more good to be done, and to be gotten and enjoyed, than in any other part of the universe."

"Those who have appeared to have the deepest conviction before they were converted, have generally appeared to have the most tender conscience, and to be the most afraid of stifling it, or acting against its dictates and remonstrances." "Good men are much more troubled with their hearts from day to day, than sinners are with their hearts."

"Men always have just as much virtue as they have self-denial."

"Christians have no more right to believe that they are insincere, without evidence, than they have to believe that they are sincere, without evidence."

"Those who walk with God are governed by his eye, as dutiful children are governed by the eye of the parent."

"The difference between the law and the gospel, does not lie in their precepts, but in their promises."

"There is ground to believe that much the largest number of those who shall be heirs of salvation, have not yet come into existence."

Digitized by Google

"Not one in ten among the learned, and not one in fifty among the unlearned, properly exercise their private judgment in forming their religious sentiments." — "It is no less the *duty* than the *right* of *every* man, to determine for himself what is true and false in theory, and what is right and wrong in practice."

"If conscience ever discerns that we have submitted to it when it dictated wrong, it will justify our cordial submission, and pronounce it an act of duty. It is indeed impossible to put a case, in which it would be right to counteract conscience." — "We must give conscience full liberty to judge before we act. It always stands ready to judge, and to judge infallibly right."

"Though an angel never experienced selfishness, yet he knows enough about it to hate it; and though a sinner never experienced holiness, yet he knows enough about it to hate it."

"The Bible history is a glass, in which all men may clearly discern their own moral features, and easily determine what manner of persons they are."

"It is a common but erroneous opinion, that an effect must have the same nature with the cause which produces it; and therefore a sinful act must flow from a sinful principle. But what did the first sinful principle flow from?"

"The contented person is in just such a situation as he, all things considered, desires to be in."

"The truth is, sometimes one moral duty ought to give way to another moral duty; sometimes one positive duty ought to give way to another positive duty; sometimes one positive duty ought to give way to another moral duty, and sometimes one moral duty ought to give way to another positive duty. This point cannot be determined by any universal rule, but must be left to the decision of every one's conscience, according to the circumstances of the present time."

"David discovered more true benevolence and virtue in his generosity to Mephibosheth, the poor, feeble son of Jonathan, than in any of his most splendid actions in the field of battle."

"Though there may be ignorance without error, yet there cannot be error without ignorance. — Indeed, learning is often the fruitful source of ignorance, as well as of knowledge; for the more ideas men collect by reading, observation, or study, the more ignorant they are, unless they are able to discern the agreement and disagreement of their ideas, and to draw just conclusions from them."

"The prospect of success is essential to the existence of zeal. Fire may as well live without air, as zeal without hope." — "The fire of zeal,

Digitized by Google

like all other fire, the longer it burns, and the wider it spreads, the more it attracts every thing around it to feed its flame."

"Reproach as naturally follows poverty and depression, as the shadow follows the body in motion."

"We have no ground to expect that God will afford us his peculiar assistance, unless we use all the means in our power to defend ourselves."

"Mankind have never been satisfied with what God has given them, with what he has denied them, with what he has taken away from them, and much less with what he has inflicted upon them. The rich have complained, that he has given them no more. The poor have complained, that he has given them so little. The prosperous have complained, that he has often interrupted their prosperity and disappointed their fond hopes and expectations. And the afflicted have complained, that he has laid upon them more than they are able to bear."

"False principles are as inconsistent with one another as with truth."

"It is true a man may be a *useful* member in any society while he is destitute of vital piety, because he may, from selfish motives, externally promote the benefit of the society to which he belongs; but he cannot be a *good* member in any society, so long as he is destitute of true love to God and man. Every man will acknowledge that he ought to be a *good*, as well as *useful* member of society; and by acknowledging this he implicitly acknowledges that he ought to love God supremely, and his neighbor as himself, and become a good *man* as well as a good *member of society*."

"If it be the policy and strength of the vicious to divide the virtuous, then it is the duty and strength of the virtuous to divide the vicious."

"That all men are equal in either a natural, or moral, or religious view, is absolutely false."

"The common opinion of the world is generally just. They seldom form a wrong judgment of those things which come under their own observation and experience. It is hardly conceivable, that they should be united for ages in any sentiment which is not founded in the truth."

### 16.—His startling apothegms.

In reading a sermon of Emmons one feels like a boatman sailing down a smooth stream by the side of even banks, and when weary of gliding along the unrippled waters, he is suddenly precipitated over a natural dam, is whirled about for a time by swift eddies, but soon all is calm again, and the silent waters move forward toward another unforeseen cascade. The plan and words of the sermon are so simple, that the reader is surprised at the bold affirmation breaking through the tranquil

Digitized by Google

style, and at the suddenness with which the author, as if unconscious of his startling thought, resumes the even tenor of his way. The reader has listlessly perused a score of gentle sentences, and then springs abruptly at words like the following:

"Certainly we have just cause to lament the decease of WASHINGTON THE GREAT. This character of right belongs to him. Great men have always been very rare in our world. Not one in a century, not one in a million of mankind has ever appeared. Though there have been many shining characters in the various learned professions, yet none of these, however acute their genius, or however extensive their learning and information, have deserved to be called great. A profession always cramps the genius, circumscribes the sphere of action, and stamps a littleness upon any human character. A great man is above learning and every learned profession. He must be an *independent citizen*, and have a full scope for the display of all his mental powers. He must be either a statesman or a warrior. In this capacity he may found, or rule, or save a nation; and thereby establish a character more durable than marble, and as lasting as the page of history. In our Washington, both the statesman and the warrior were united."

"It seems to be the design of Providence to diminish other nations, and to increase and strengthen ours. The nations of Europe are destroying one another by millions year after year." — "One war after another will probably *gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty*. Hence there is reason to believe that God is about to transfer the empire of the world from Europe to America, where he has planted his peculiar people." — Other nations "may be the *occasion* and we the *cause* of enlarging, purifying, and adorning the Christian church."

The *mode* of baptism was not designed to signify the *mode* of the Spirit's operation; but, even if it were, "we must conclude that sprinkling is the scriptural mode of baptism. For sprinkling much more resembles the mode of the Spirit's *descent* and *influence upon* the minds of men, than plunging. The Psalmist, speaking of the *descent* of the Spirit, says: 'He shall *come down like rain upon* the mown grass; as *showers* that water the earth.' God says: 'I will be as the *dew* unto Israel.' And again he says to the same people: 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you.'"

"Ten thousand times more has been said against God, in our rebellious world, than against any other being in the universe."

"The men of this world form the *only* ignorant and stupid part of the intelligent creation."



Digitized by Google

"The day of grace which sinners now enjoy is the *most* important part of their whole existence."

"*We* are in a more solemn and interesting situation, than any other intelligent creatures in any other part of the universe, because we have more to gain or to lose than they, in the space of a very few years, or a very few days."

"Christians are the most inconsistent persons in the world."

"There are only a few, that ever do good; and none, that always do good."

"The certainty of a man's being saved is consistent with the danger of his being lost."

"You are no better than your heart is, for your heart is yourself. Your heart is no worse than you are; for you, as a moral agent, are your heart."

"Those who built the ark were instrumental of saving the whole world from utter ruin; but we have no reason to think that any one of them had the least regard to the glory of God and the good of mankind."

"If Satan were placed in the same situation in which sinners are now placed, he would appear as good as they. Or, if they were placed in the same situation in which he is now placed, they would appear as bad as he."

"Common Christians may now know much more about Christ, heaven, and hell, than even the prophets and most eminent saints knew, before the gospel day."

"Though the neglect of moral duties is a greater reproach to professors of religion than the neglect of positive duties, yet the strict performance of positive duties is a greater honor to their religion than the observance of moral duties."

"Though ignorance may be the mother of devotion, it cannot be the mother of piety."

"Every son and daughter of Adam has had a heart that would, if possible, destroy its Creator. On the cross, as in a mirror, we may see our natural malignity and mortal enmity, and the natural malignity and mortal enmity of all mankind against our rightful Lord and Sovereign."

"If Christians had neglected to attend and maintain this sacred ordinance [the Lord's supper] for more than eighteen hundred years past, we have no reason to think that we should ever have heard of the person and death of Christ, or the religion which he taught."

"Christ has chosen his friends from before the foundation of the world. He has thus *commemorated them*. Why, then, should they not *commemorate him* and his death?"

Digitized by Google

"If those who die go immediately to the dead, then every instance of mortality may be as affecting to the inhabitants of the other world, as to those in this."

### 17.—His homiletic apothegms.

Perhaps the most vivid idea may be formed of Dr. Emmons as a preacher, by considering the homiletic principles which he was wont to enforce upon his pupils and young clerical friends. The following are specimens of them:

"Let your sermon, like a sugar loaf, begin at a point, and widen and expand to the end."

"First address the understanding, secondly the conscience, and lastly the passions of your hearers."

"Endeavor to leave the *subject* of your discourse on the minds of your hearers, rather than a few striking *sentiments* or *expressions*."

"Take care, in delivery, to stand *behind* and not *before* your subject."

"Preach *upon* your subject, and not *about* it."

"In composing, it is much less difficult to find out what to say, than what to leave unsaid."

"We ought to judge ministers not only by what they do say, but by what they do not say."

To a young preacher he said, "Never try to do what you know you cannot do; never try to be what you know you cannot be; but try to preach better and better every Sabbath, which you can do."

"Let your eloquence flow from your heart to your hands, and never attempt to force it the other way."

Being asked, "What is the secret of popular preaching?" he replied, "To preach without meddling with your hearers' consciences;" and again, "Preach with animation enough to produce a great excitement of the natural sympathies, which will make persons think they have some native goodness;" and still again, "Let your sermons be without beginning, middle, or end."

"Every thing that captivates will at length disgust; therefore popularity cannot live."

"It is a great pity that certain men who can preach so well, do not preach better."

On being asked what was the most important requisite for a preacher, he replied, "That he be established in first principles. If he be not, he will continually contradict himself. The most important requisites for an *extemporaneous* preacher are ignorance, impudence, and presumption. It is a great blessing to be able to talk half an hour about nothing. The

Digitized by Google

great body of extemporaneous preachers are *pro tempore* preachers. It is easy, *very* easy, to preach, but very hard to preach well. I have often wondered at myself, that I ever agreed to preach two sermons a week. It makes me shudder at times to think that I ever dared to do it. No other profession demands half so much mental labor as ours."

"In writing sermons, always have a plan, and let every sentence help accomplish that plan. Let your sermons and your prayers have a beginning, middle, and end. Keep your best and most important thought till the last. The close of a sermon should be like the approach of a ship to the wharf, *with all sails standing.*"

"For attaining perspicuity and precision of style, first consider *what* you wish to say, and then *how* to say it."

[In conversation he often modified this rule, and gave it in a form which is itself worth a volume of rhetoric: "First, find out what you wish to say; secondly, *say it.*"]

"Style is only the frame to hold our thoughts. It is like the sash of a window; a heavy sash will obscure the light. The object is to have as little sash as will hold the lights, that we may not think of the frame, but have the most light."

"So construct your sentences as to bring out your principal meaning as early as possible; this will secure brevity and perspicuity; it relieves the minds of hearers or readers, and facilitates the entrance of ideas."[1]

If you desire to be popular, do not *explain your terms.* Preach about total depravity, regeneration, etc., and leave your hearers to understand your language in their own sense, which they will all approve. They will praise you for saying a great many very good things.

"It is the proper business of an ambassador, who is appointed to negotiate a treaty of peace between two contending parties, to bring the controversy to a crisis; and as soon as he has fairly stated the ultimatum of his commission, mutual reconciliation immediately commences, or open war is proclaimed. Just so, it is the design of the faithful ambassadors of Christ, to deliver the terms of reconciliation, which God has proposed in the gospel, so plainly, so fully, and so impressively, as to bring the controversy between him and his disaffected subjects to a crisis, and produce either peace or war. Those ministers who preach the gospel plainly, fully, and faithfully, do not usually leave their people as they find them, from Sabbath to Sabbath. They either conciliate, or alienate

[1] This rule is as different from the following aphorism of John Foster, as the preacher of Franklin is unlike the British essayist: "Burke's sentences are pointed at the end, — instinct with pungent sense to the last syllable. They are like a charioteer's whip, which has not only a long and effective lash, but *cracks*, and inflicts a still smarter sensation at the end. They are like some serpents of which I have heard it vulgarly said, their life is fiercest in the tail." — *Foster's Life and Correspondence.* Vol. I. p. 178, London.

Digitized by Google

the affections of their hearers towards their offended and injured Sovereign."

"It is not enough for the professed ministers of Christ and successors of the apostles, to preach merely about the gospel, and about its leading sentiments, and only inculcate some of its moral duties; they ought to spend more time, and take more care to preach the pure gospel itself, and make men understand it, in its true import and extensive meaning."

"Be short in all religious exercises. Better leave the people longing than loathing."

"There are no conversions after the hour is out."

"He who preaches less than half an hour, had better never have gone into the pulpit; he who preaches more, had better never have come out of it."

"Hearers will always give you their attention, if you give them any thing to attend to."

The apostles "always preached boldly, though not always successfully; but yet their success is not unfrequently ascribed to their boldness."

"Those who attempt to preach the gospel without its threatenings, do not preach the whole gospel, nor half the gospel, nor any part of the gospel, but that which is subversive of the whole gospel."

"The divine may walk with historians, metaphysicians, and philosophers, as far as *they* go, and then pass on to regions *beyond* the circle of *their* acquaintance."

### 18.—Effect of his discourses.

Men who have been the most familiar with the Franklin pulpit, have written the most glowing descriptions of its power. Dr. Ide informs us, that whether the auditors of Emmons "believed or disbelieved, liked or disliked what he said, they could not help *hearing* him; and, generally speaking, the interest excited was equal to the attention." "Every eye would be upon him," "the stillness of the grave would pervade the assembly;" "emotions of high gratification and delight would be seen upon the countenances of some, while conviction, alarm, opposition, solemnity, and all sorts of feelings, would often be indicated by the looks of others."

The reports are numberless of the effect produced on particular individuals, by the words, as goads, of this pertinent sermonizer. Some of these rumors are too amazing to be narrated here, without more vouchers for their authenticity than we have space to accommodate. One of the tamer and ordinary traditions is, that a strong-minded young man, a ringleader in the irreligious plots of the community, was struck down as if an electric shock had prostrated him, and was prevented from executing one



Digitized by Google

of his mischievous schemes, by the *tone* in which Emmons repeated, and by the *pointed* comments with which he accompanied the words: "Then Saul (who also is called Paul) filled with the Holy Ghost, *set his eyes upon him*, and said, O *full of all subtilty* and all *mischief*, thou — CHILD OF THE DEVIL, thou enemy of all righteousness; — *wilt* thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" This quotation is found in Emmons's Works, Vol. II. p. 725. There are internal signs that his lightning-like comments *may* have been made *extempore* in that paragraph. The electric spirit of them has vanished from the words as they appear in type. We can imagine what we do not distinctly see. We are reminded of the language uttered by the younger Pitt: I have heard of the marvellous eloquence of my father; I believe in it; but I could never find it in his printed speeches.

There are numerous testimonies from eminent critics, ratifying the common traditions of Emmons's power in the pulpit. The following are specimens:

When the modest preacher had passed his threescore years and ten, he was journeying through New Haven, Conn., and he concluded to tarry there a few hours. He had no thought of being invited to preach at mid-day in that Athenian city; but being urged, he consented to allow the church bell to be rung, and verbal notice to be circulated as rapidly as possible, that he would deliver a discourse. Professor Kingsley heard him with great admiration, and said:

"After Emmons had announced his subject [the 'Foreknowledge of God'], some of the hearers rose and left the house; not caring to hear a metaphysical disquisition from an old man, who held his manuscript before his face, and read it in a low monotone. The more intelligent auditors, however, remained; and as they saw one truth educed from another, they became curious to see the whole thread unravelled; and many leaned forward in their pews eager to catch every intonation of his still small voice. It was the eloquence of reason. It was true, intellectual eloquence, compared with which all florid declamation is contemptible."

A late Professor in one of our Theological Seminaries, has said:

"I passed a Sabbath in Franklin, partly for the purpose of hearing Dr. Emmons in his own pulpit. He took for his text: 'Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord,' and educed from it the proposition, 'Men are more merciful to their enemies than God is to his.' From the beginning to the end of his two discourses on this theme, the whole congregation were increasingly intent; first, to see what doctrine would come from such a text, for all knew that some doctrine would come, of course; then, after the thrill occasioned by so startling a paradox, to see how the preacher would solve the enigma and unfold the truths it enveloped; and finally, to imbibe the rich treasures of practical wisdom which were successively introduced and solemnly enforced in what was called the *Improvement*. I was abundantly rewarded for my Sabbath day's sojourn in that quiet town. I felt an emotion of the moral sublime, when I saw one old man after another, who had grown gray under the patriarch's

Digitized by Google

ministrations, bending forward in breathless silence, rising at length from their seats, and gazing with eagerness to catch every word that fell from the lips of their teacher. The several parts of the discourses were kept so distinct, were arranged with so much skill, and announced in so uncompromising a style, that curiosity was kept on the alert, to see what would come next; and we all looked forward with growing interest for the catastrophe of the whole plan."

### § 2. *Emmons as a Pastor.*

One of the most eloquent divines in this or in any land, has remarked: "I have derived more accurate ideas of theology from Emmons's sermons, than from any uninspired writings; yet I regard his *funeral* sermons as his *best*." Another has said: "As a *preacher*, I regard Emmons as instructive, yet he gives me the wisest lessons, as a *pastor*." Each of these judgments is peculiar. Still, the pastorate of Emmons is eminently suggestive. Its rich intimations may be seen in the following particulars:

#### A. — His Devotion to his Flock.

"He devoted all his time to his strong doctrinal sermons, but very little of his time to parochial cares:" — this is a general criticism on Dr. Emmons. It is unjust. He was a good preacher, because he was a good pastor. His sermons are thought to be metaphysical essays, generic, abstract. The reverse is true. They are *Franklin* sermons. When we think of his devotedness to the men and women and children of *Franklin*, we wonder at the exuberance of his philosophical investigations. He labored in the study, in order to enrich his people. He engaged in his most abstruse inquiries, so that he might answer some objections propounded by some one of his people. He diversified his intellectual pursuits, in order to diversify his addresses to his people. He was a pastor in his reading, in his thinking, in his writing. "I do love Franklin," was his phrase, uttered familiarly in his athletic manhood, and repeated in most affecting tones, on his dying bed.

#### A. — His Originality in his Pastorate.

As he had his own style of dress, so he had his own style of pastoral supervision. He has been criticized for interpreting the English Bible too literally. But we must not imagine that he really supposed the apostle James to prescribe an immutable rule for Congregational Elders, when that apostle said: "Is any man sick among you, let him *call* for the elders of the church," etc. Emmons *did* quote these words, in ac-

Digitized by Google

commodation to *his own* rule for visiting his parishioners when, for a special and valid reason, he was particularly *requested* to visit them. As soon as he was invited to wait on an afflicted household, he promptly complied with the invitation. Whenever prayers were publicly asked for an individual, he considered himself as requested to visit that individual, and he uniformly yielded to the wish thus tacitly expressed. We are told by Dr. Ide:

Dr. Emmons did *sometimes* call upon the sick without waiting for the above-named formalities. 'But he thought it best both for him and the people to have it understood that, as a general rule, they must signify their wish, if they desired to see him. He then always knew what to do, and they what to expect.' He encouraged his people 'to *visit him;* and it was understood by them, that he was glad to see them at his house whenever they desired to converse with him on religious themes. They availed themselves of the opportunity which he gave them. The members of his church frequently called upon him, and encouraged their children and families and others to do the same.' They dined or supped at the parsonage, more frequently than parishioners often do.

'He sometimes *sent* for individuals in his parish whom he wished to see, and when they were retired with him alone, he would converse with them with great plainness, affection, and fidelity.'

Another clergyman writes: 'While on a journey through Franklin, I was surprised in noticing a large number of carriages before the parsonage. I supposed that there was some "Society Meeting." But I afterwards learned that these were the carriages of individuals, who of their own accord, had gone up to see the old patriarch, and learn from him what they must do for the welfare of their souls. It was a time of awakened interest in religion, and this throng at the parsonage was one sign of it.'

We are further told by Dr. Ide, that 'Emmons seldom conversed with individuals in a family upon the subject of their own feelings or personal condition *before each other*, because, as he used to say, they would not, unless very specially aroused, express themselves freely. In a revival, when his people were so much interested on the subject of religion as to be willing to talk, he would converse with them *anywhere*. After a lecture at the meeting-house, he would sometimes request those who were disposed to hold a conversation with him to tarry, and sometimes more than half the congregation would stop either to converse or to hear. But he thought that *in general* he was laboring at a great disadvantage, if he undertook to converse particularly with the members of the same family on the subject of their own feelings, *in the presence of each other*. On this account he chose to see them at his study, rather than at their homes.'

'The loss of time attending it, was one reason why he did not adopt the common method of pastoral visitation. Frequently, the persons whom the minister goes to see are not at home; and if at home, they are perhaps engaged in some business which they cannot without great inconvenience leave; or if disengaged, they may be so connected with others either of their own family or visitors from abroad, that he cannot accomplish the purpose of his errand. By the experiments which he had made on this subject, Dr. Emmons was led to conclude that it would be a great economy of time to see his people at his own house.'

Digitized by Google

'Some ministers,' he often remarked, 'have a peculiar talent for conversing with individuals and families on religion, and can do more good in this way than they can by preaching; and it is important that those who have this talent should know it, and pursue such a course as will enable them to improve it to the greatest advantage.' But he regarded himself as endued with a talent, not so much for the off-hand, desultory, miscellaneous converse of the parlor,[1] as for investigating and explaining the doctrines of the Bible in their reciprocal connections, and in lengthened discussions. He therefore said, near the end of his days: "If I were to live my life over again, I would pursue the same course" which I have pursued in reference to parochial labor. The missionary, Gordon Hall, once remarked: "Though I admit that pastoral visits are important, and may with propriety occupy a proportion of most ministers' time, yet I do think that the man who can write as Dr. Emmons does, ought not to be diverted from his studies by these things."

C. — His familiar Acquaintance with his Parishioners.

He was a physiognomist. He loved and studied Lavater. Because he did not consume his days and evenings in the ordinary chit-chat of the social circle, it has been inferred that he could not ascertain the private habits and secret projects of his hearers. But in his study, he learned more about them, than ordinary men could learn by promiscuous intercourse. There seemed, at times, to be something almost magical in his power of finding out every new scheme that was started within his diocese. He had a keen insight of the human heart. One of his favorite remarks was: "Every man carries a little world within himself, by knowing which he may know all the rest of mankind, and form a just estimate of human nature." Another favorite saying was: "A pious minister knows more than others know about the human heart, and will tell his hearers how they *have* felt and how they feel at present." A native of Franklin has observed: "The mind of Dr. Emmons moved with great rapidity. His intuitions of character were less rapid than his other acts. He did not see through men at a glance, but if you would give him time, he would measure them like a tailor." — Dr. Ide and others have given us the following testimony:

Emmons '*took great pains* to become acquainted with *all* his people; and in the prime of his life, there were very few among them who were not well known to him, either in person or by their characters. Every part of his parish, and every individ-

[1] He was too diffident to converse freely with more than one person at a time; hence he underrated his conversational powers. Professor Pond, of Bangor, writes: "In his intercourse with all men he was courteous and affable; but was specially free and sociable with his friends. No man enjoyed such intercourse more than he; no man was capable of making it more agreeable. In conversation, as in reading, he was not confined to theological subjects, but was able to take a wide range. One gentleman, who often saw him, remarked: 'He talks upon every subject introduced as though he had just been studying it.' He knew how to be grave and instructive in conversation, and he knew how to spice it with all the pungency of attic wit."

Digitized by Google

ual in it, with whom he had become acquainted, was an object of his almost daily consideration. He *inquired* into their belief and practice, on the subject of religion. He always noticed their attendance upon, or neglect of the means of grace. Whether they were penitent or impenitent, was a question of great apparent solicitude with him. He noticed with special interest the conduct of church-members, and seriously considered the influence which, in their respective circumstances, they were exerting upon the cause of Christ. He always had his eye on the *town*, and upon *men of influence* in the town, and traced the bearings of every important transaction among them upon their religious interests.'

He watched the aged, and marked the influence of their example on the rising generation. He kept his eye on men in the meridian of life, and endeavored to bring their *strength* into the service of their Master. He was never unmindful of the young, their means of education, their employments, their amusements. One of his parishioners has said: "If a dancing party, or a convivial sleigh-ride was proposed, he was among the first to hear of it, and was quick as well as strict to prevent it. On the Sabbath after any such proposition had been found out, his parishioners flocked to the sanctuary; parents, apprehending that they might be reprimanded for their remissness; children, anticipating a lesson for themselves on frivolous amusements; all, expecting some wholesome advice, but no one foresceing exactly how it would be applied."

'The wakeful pastor always kept watch of the literary, religious, and political publications of the day; upon the movements of the different religious denominations; the doings of ecclesiastical bodies; the plans and operations of ministers; and the state of religion in the community, especially in his own neighborhood; and never failed to consider minutely the probable influence for good or evil, which these things would have *upon his own people.*'

D.—He combined a stern Fidelity, with a tender Love, to his People.

"*This is what I think; and I am willing to speak what I think. I have nothing to conceal upon this subject. I mean to be frank and open in opposing every thing which appears*" to threaten any evil to you. These are the words which he uttered, more than once, in critical emergencies among his people. Never could he be intimidated or bribed, from his vigilant supervision over the high and the low. There goes a rumor, that a gleeful company made him a generous donation before they engaged in a frolicsome ride, and they hoped that his well-known politeness would prevent his reprimand of his benefactors on the succeeding Sabbath. But he did not keep back the dreaded reprimand, being stimulated to an unwonted plainness of speech by the generosity of his young friends. Dr. Ide says:

'No offender could long sit under the preaching of Emmons, or be in the habit of familiar intercourse with him, without receiving, in some form or other, decisive evidence that his conduct was understood, and disapproved. His people felt that they were under his eye, and anticipated reproof whenever their guilt was known. His pastoral supervision was a constant source of encouragement to the righteous, and of restraint to the wicked.'

Digitized by Google

But many who know how vigilant he was in detecting, and how pungent he was in rebuking, the aberrations of his people, are not easily assured that he was an *affectionate* pastor. Had he not felt a peculiar attachment to his hearers, they would not have borne so meekly his stern reproofs. But they knew that "he sympathized with them in all their enjoyments, and in all their sufferings. In the sick chamber, and at the house of mourning, he was not only peculiarly appropriate and instructive in his conversation and prayers, but peculiarly kind and sympathetic." — The Hon. Tristram Burgess, widely known as a Professor of Rhetoric in Brown University, and as an eloquent orator at the Bar and in Congress, has thus described the kindliness of the Franklin pastor:

"With Dr. Emmons I was personally acquainted. His excellence as a distinguished preacher of the gospel, is known and acknowledged universally. In this eminent department I, many years ago, knew and admired him. Before that time, he had become endeared to me by another kind of excellence. Though a stranger to him, and not then residing in his parish, 'I was sick, and he visited me.' To know him as he really was, you must have met him by the bed of pain, prostration, and anxiety. Here I first saw him; and such was his discourse, so pious, so parental, so consoling, that it never has been, and I think never will be, forgotten by me. For at this moment, he lives in my memory as he then sat by my bedside, the very image, it seemed to me, of his great and gracious Master. My dear Sir,[1] should you write the biography of this good man, say, if you please, that, among divines, he was the greatest; but you cannot forget to say, that, among Christians, he was the best."

E. — His Pastorate was a solemn one.

"All pious brothers and sisters, all pious parents and children, all pious husbands and wives, all pious friends, and all pious ministers and their pious hearers, will be forever known to each other and intimately connected in heaven, and mutually promote each other's felicity:" — this was a favorite thought of Emmons; and, accordingly, his pastorate was commenced, and continued, and ended with an habitual anticipation of its interminable influence. In view of his relations to his parishioners in the future world, he often appealed to them, as none but a conscientious pastor would dare to appeal in public. In his seventy-fifth year, he addressed to them these plain, honest words:

"Have any children and youth, anywhere, become more stupid, hardened, profane, and obstinate in wickedness, than those who are now before me, and who have often heard my warning voice? How much soever I may have failed in the discharge of

[1] The letter was addressed to Rev. Thomas Williams. See his Sermon on the "Official Character of Dr. Emmons," p. 79.

Digitized by Google

my ministerial office for forty-six years, I have not designedly been negligent in warning, admonishing, and reproving children and youth, as occasions have occurred. I have been so uniform and constant in this part of my duty, that both the young and the old have often anticipated reproofs, and taken pains either not to hear them, or resist them. And though they have so often and so long resisted, yet I do not regret the exertions I have made to awaken, and convince, and convert, and restrain the children and youth. But whether I have met with the concurrence of others in my exertions so much as ought to have been afforded, I leave to the serious consideration and reflection of professing parents, and professing Christians, and every one who regards the temporal and eternal good of the rising generation.

"But is there no hope? Most certainly there is. I can remember the time when some of the best Christians now before me were vain and thoughtless youth. God arrested them in their career, changed their hearts, compelled them to come in and unite in building up his cause. The present children and youth are not beyond his reach. The voice from the dead and from the living, this day, may do what has not been done for years past. Though there is much ground to despair of veteran sinners, there is still ground to hope that God will raise up from the children and youth a generation to serve him, when we who are aged are laid in the dust."

F.—His Pastorate was an authoritative one.

"That is not to be done in Franklin," was a *pronunciamento* sometimes heard from his lips, and whenever it was once heard, the thing proposed *to be done* was numbered among the past things left *undone*. Scores of illustrations like the following might here be cited:

When a very respectable clergyman of another denomination had appointed a religious meeting within the bounds of Dr. Emmons's own diocese, but without consulting the diocesan himself, the *bishop* of Franklin met the "*sectarian*," and quietly informed him: "*You are expected to keep on your own side of the parish line.*" He kept there.

Another eminent clergyman, who did not belong to the "standing order," was once invited to preach at the house of a Franklin parishioner; and he intended, as the Franklin bishop thought, to excite an interest among the peaceful Congregationalists, in favor of the "intruding sect." Soon after receiving the invitation, this clergyman met Dr. Emmons in Boston, and told him that he had been invited to come and give his people a sermon. The doctor very pleasantly replied, 'You have a very important sphere of labor assigned you where you are. You need not take the trouble to come to Franklin. I can take care of my own flock.' But said the clergyman, 'You will not object to my coming.' The doctor understanding by this that he was still inclined to come, notwithstanding the hint which had been given him, made the following characteristic reply. 'I do object. And if you come to Franklin in our present circumstances, I'll consider and treat you as a wolf in sheep's clothing.' This clergyman never came.[1]

There has seldom lived an ecclesiastic whose voice was law within his

[1] See Dr. Ide's Memoir, p. 71.

Digitized by Google

own diocese, more decidedly than was the voice of Emmons. He was "set apart" as the spiritual guardian of Franklin, and he considered himself as responsible for the spiritual care of the men over whom he had been ordained. He was stationed upon the watch-tower, and he felt himself commissioned to let in all those soldiers who would promote the peace of the enclosure, and to keep out all those who would foment strife. He had a peculiar respect for the old parish lines, and he did more than perhaps any other clergyman to preserve the dignity and the Episcopal power of a parish minister. Accordingly, the ancient precinct that settled him was the precinct that buried him sixty-seven years afterward, having remained one strong, undivided parish as long as he lived. There were not many townships in New England which had a population large enough for two societies, and which yet continued to worship in one sanctuary. For strictly economical reasons, for his delivering them from the expense of two meeting-houses, and from the trouble of two systems of ecclesiastical action, the citizens of Franklin might well have felt thankful to their sagacious custodian.

### G. — The Pastor's Wit.

When Emmons could not silence a schismatical intruder by reason, he resorted to wit. He was fond of argument, but if proofs would not secure the good which he desired, he would try the virtue of a jest; for that good must be attained; logically, if possible; wittily, if needful. "You can never throw a man down who stands upon nothing," was his favorite remark, and he therefore never intended to waste his logic upon a hopeless victim. It is a remarkable instance of his well balanced mind, that while he was exuberant in pleasantries, at fitting seasons, he did not intersperse his graver remarks with ludicrous allusions. In his thousands of pulpit discourses, there is scarcely an expression which need excite the sentiment of the ludicrous; and a man would scarcely suspect, from a perusal of them, that their author could indulge his mind in mere fanciful relations. But when he had tasked his logical power to its utmost intensity for the benefit of his hearers, and still detected in any of them a peccadillo or a crime which could be shot at in no other way, he would let fly some witty sarcasm; which would show that he had always a *dernier* resort, and when foiled with one weapon, could turn his hand immediately to another. It is said of Lord Thurlow, that he was a kind of *guarda costa* vessel, which cannot meet every turning and winding of a frigate that assails her; but when the opportunity offers, pours a broadside which cannot fail of sinking the assailant. But Dr. Emmons was armed on all sides, and at all points. There was no such thing as get-



Digitized by Google

ting round him without receiving a shock. Hence he was feared by evil doers of every class. He meant to be. He employed his wit upon them, when he found that he could employ nothing else.

There was a skeptic in religion who was very fond of displaying his acumen before ministers of the gospel, and of perplexing them with atheistical queries. On one occasion he called on the man who was not so easily perplexed, and after giving sensible evidence that he was too highly stimulated with brandy for any rational conversation, he asked with the gravity of a sage, "Dr. Emmons, can you tell me what I am to understand by *the soul* of man?" "No, I can't tell a man that hasn't got any." Here ended the inquiries of the man who did not know the meaning of the word soul, but found out that there was either a soul or something else in Dr. Emmons which was not to be trifled with.

There was a physician in the neighborhood of Franklin, who was corrupting the minds of men by his Pantheism. This physician being called to a sick family in the Franklin parish, met the Franklin minister at the house of affliction. It was no place for a dispute. It was no place for a physician to affect any unbecoming familiarity with the minister. It was no place for a physician to inquire into the age of the minister, especially with any intent of entangling him in a debate; and above all, where the querist was too visionary for any logical discussion. But the abrupt question of the pantheist was:

"Mr. Emmons, how old are you?"

"Sixty, sir, and how old are you?" came the quick reply.

"As old as the creation, sir," was the triumphant response.

"Then you are of the same age with Adam and Eve."

"Certainly, I was in the garden when they were."

"I have always heard that there was a third person in the garden with them, but I never knew before that it was *you*."

The pantheist did not follow up the discussion. The family felt that they had a minister who *was* a minister, and who could shield them from all unseemly assaults upon their faith.

### H. — The Pastor's Dignity.

The preceding illustrations remind us, that the parishioners of Emmons felt proud of him, as a champion who could use all weapons that were needful to repel assailants. They revered him for his native and habitual dignity. "Forty-five years ago," says one who left the neighborhood of Franklin in his youth, "I attended the funeral of a young relative who had died suddenly in that neighborhood. Dr. Emmons officiated. I can never forget his healthful face, the dignity with which he took his three-cornered hat from his head, walked into the crowded house, and began his address with these words: 'That death should *come*, is not strange; but that death should *come suddenly*, is strange.'" — When Emmons appeared in the streets of a New England city, at the age of seventy-seven, with his "distinctive" hat, the bright buckles on his shoe and knee, his white locks flowing down his shoulders, the boys flocked after him, as after a military general. Once, as he was seen

Digitized by Google

walking with his usual upright mien over a parade ground, it was well said of him, that he might be taken for some veteran commander, revisiting the plain over which he had marched seventy years before. Nor was his character less erect than his person. He would be one of the last men to be suspected of a meanness. He did not stoop. He was, indeed, simple-hearted as a child. Like Luther and Calvin, he could talk with the younger members of his parochial family, as if one of them, and had a hearty interest in their sports. But on the other hand, he was feared as well as loved. He could easily keep others at a distance, when his office and his duty required. It was not uncommon for strong men to tremble in his presence. Hence there has seldom lived a pastor who can be more truly said to have *ruled well* in his parish, and whose word was clothed with a simpler majesty.

We often read of Episcopal bishops, that their immense revenues are essential to the dignity of their office. The episcopal revenue of Dr. Emmons never amounted to more than five hundred dollars a year, and it never added a very dazzling splendor to his see. He manifested the exaltation of his nature by seldom alluding to his income. He never hinted that presents would be welcome to him. He never intimated a wish to have his salary raised. He never went, but once in seventy-six years, to the treasurer of the parish, in order to receive the pittance due to him. That treasurer knew, perfectly, that when the "pay-day" came he was to visit the parsonage, and take with him the hard-earned salary. But one year, a new treasurer was elected, who thought it advisable that all the creditors of the parish should *wait on* him for the payment due to them, rather than be *waited upon by* him for their own benefit. The "salary day" came. He remained at home, to receive the doctor's call. But the doctor remained in his study. The next day passed, and the next, and at length came the eleventh day; when, each party waiting for the other, there seemed to be a growing difference of opinion between the man who taught the people and the man who kept the bag. At last the treasurer saw the neat carriage driving up to his front door, and the three-cornered hat in the carriage. The doctor alighted from the chaise, holding his reins and his whip. He knocked. The door was opened. "Is Mr. A. at home?" "He is." "I should be glad to see him." Mr. A. came, and stood before his minister. "Good morning, sir," was the minister's word. "Good morning, sir," was the treasurer's reply. "I have been expecting," added the minister, "for eleven days to see you at my house. Good-bye, sir," and he added no more, but his fleet horse took him back straight to the parsonage, and the treasurer followed him before noon, carrying the delayed salary, and resolving to try no more experiments.

Digitized by Google

I. — His Promptness and Punctuality.

"I never could think well of a man's intellectual or moral character, if he was habitually unfaithful to his appointments," was a remark often repeated by Dr. Emmons. 'He always took care not to expose himself needlessly to storms, to evening air, to excessive cold or heat, but when duty obviously called him abroad, no weather could keep him in; he was resolute and fearless.' As he was precise with regard to the *position* of things in his study: "*This* chair belongs *here*," "*That* book belongs *there*;" so he was precise with regard to the *time* of his services *in* doors and *out*. His hearers did not loiter around the place for a religious exercise, querying when he would arrive; but precisely at the hour appointed he would come, as they knew, and he would expect to *find* them *in their seats*. "A time for every thing, and every thing at its time," was his motto, and it moulded not the religious character only, but the secular habits also of both himself and his people. He made out his schedule of duties and adhered to it. One of his rules for the concerns of his public and private life, for the course of a journey and for the structure of a sermon was: "Beware of deviating from your *original plan*, which is probably the best one." He was saved from much annoyance, from many vexatious delays, by this simple rule. Near the close of his life, being urged by Judge Samuel Hubbard of Boston, to modify his plan of a certain visit, he replied in his epigrammatic way: "I never altered my mind but once, and have regretted that change ever since." His high estimate of punctuality as a virtue is singularly illustrated in one of his sermons where it is written: 'The Sovereign of the universe is faithful and *punctual* in fulfilling all his promises.'

§ 3. *Emmons's brief Statement of his Labors in his Parish.*

The modest man has compressed a chapter into the following significant words:

"I uniformly carried on the work of the ministry. I statedly preached on the Sabbath, and occasionally in private houses. I visited the sick and attended funerals. I catechized the children and youths once a year, in eight or nine school districts in my extensive parish. I always attended, and generally preached at religious conferences, in times of revival; and from the year 1795 to the year 1813, I constantly preached a concert lecture once in three months. I constantly and punctually attended all my official duties for fifty-four years." — *Memoir of himself.*

Digitized by Google

A. — "I catechized the Children."

The catechetical exercise of Dr. Emmons was conducted with great spirit. "What is your name?" was the first question formerly put to every collegian, as he entered the room of his President, even if the collegian were as well known as the President's own son. "What is your name?" was the first question addressed by Emmons to every child who rose up with the words of the Westminster divines upon his tongue, even if the child were as familiar to the pastor as one of his own household. The name being given, two or three questions of the Shorter Catechism were proposed to the child; and, at the end of the service, the entire assembly was addressed by the impressive divine. His words were plain, instructive, and engaging. The children looked forward with joy to their annual examination. "I felt as if I had started for a training, when I went to meet the Doctor in the school-house," said an eminent jurist who had been one of Emmons's catechumens. The terse, racy words which the minister uttered to the children, were long remembered. Some of his old parishioners have loved to repeat the sentences which they heard from him in these catechetical exercises, and which they had retained in their mind seventy or eighty years. Rev. Mortimer Blake, rehearsing before his townsmen in Franklin, the virtues of their pastor, bore the following testimony:

"It has been inquired, whether Dr. Emmons had much influence over the children and youth of his parish. In answer, — and I speak the conviction of all my former youthful companions, — I say, *no one had so entirely our veneration.* I think of no better word to express our emotion. We felt not fear, but deep, involuntary respect. *We looked upon Dr. Emmons as God's ambassador.*

"We can never forget our annual gatherings at the school-house, in the autumn, to recite to him the Lord's Prayer, the Commandments, and the Assembly's Catechism. We remember the sedulous preparation we used to make, to pass the examination with credit to our parents and ourselves. The enjoyment of his approving smile still thrills in our memory; and the truths we then learned, and his pithy observations to us, are now as bright in our recollection as ever." — (Address at the erection of the Emmons Monument, p. 10.)

B. — "I preached a Concert Lecture."

"For seventeen years, on the first Tuesday in each quarter of the year, Dr. Emmons gave a public lecture in the meeting-house, on the duty of prayer for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom throughout the world." This was in accordance with the recommendation of President Edwards in his sermon published in 1784, and entitled:



Digitized by Google

"*An* HUMBLE ATTEMPT *to promote an explicit* agreement *and visible* union *of God's people through the world,* in extraordinary PRAYER *for the* REVIVAL *of* religion *and the advancement of* Christ's kingdom *on earth, pursuant to Scripture promises and prophecies concerning the* last time,

OCCASIONED

"By a late MEMORIAL published by a number of ministers in *Scotland* and sent over to *America;* giving an account of a certain CONCERT *for prayer,* — which has already been come into by many ministers and others in *Great Britain* and some other parts, and in which they desire the *general concurrence* of their Christian brethren everywhere," etc.

This concert lecture was attended in Franklin by large numbers and with great enthusiasm. It was a sign of the lecturer's early zeal in behalf of missions. In his attachment to the old usages, he preferred this venerable exercise to the Monthly Concert, which was subsequently introduced. A young woman of his parish, having received an offer of marriage from a young man who did not belong to the church, accepted the offer on one condition; to wit: *the young man must engage to attend the Quarterly Lecture.*[1] Just so theological was the town which derives its main celebrity from its modest pastor.

C. — "I uniformly carried on the Work of the Ministry." — "I statedly preached on the Sabbath." — "I constantly and punctually attended all my official Duties."

These adverbs "*uniformly,*" "*statedly,*" "*constantly,*" *punctually,*" condense a large analysis of the substance, the spirit, the method, and the times of his public services. Every year he kept fifty-two church festivals, fifty-two Christmas, Easter, and Ascension days, fifty-two Whit-Sundays and Trinity Sundays, fifty-two days for commemorating the scene of Good Friday. Thus he made the Sabbath memorable.

As no child in his parish ever went to the sanctuary with the hope of seeing the new surplice, or hearing the new organ, so not one ever expected to find the minister wearing a slouched hat or a soiled garment, or making an antic gesture. "Uniform" decorum marked his appearance as he moved along to the house of God. A layman in his parish never thought of calling him "Brother Emmons." "I am no leveller,"

[1] It is difficult to estimate at the present day, the enthusiasm which was enlisted in favor of this pastor's sermons among his own people. Professor Pond writes: "By the fascination of his influence, he held his people together, and brought them together to the house of God, as almost no other minister could. And this was the case, not only on the Sabbath, but at his *Sacramental* Lectures. I remember the first time that I attended one of these lectures. I was astonished, as I approached the house, to see the long tier of horse-sheds filled with carriages; and was equally surprised, when I entered the church, to find that filled also. The explanation is, Dr. Emmons made the impression on his people, and kept it up to the last, that his public services were *worth something,* and that to be absent from one of them was to sustain a great loss."

Digitized by Google

was his word. He could never be mistaken for one of his parishioners. When he entered the pulpit, he found his auditors already in their pews. He needed to wait for no one. He began the "stated" services by reading one of the songs of Zion. It was *sung*, and he allowed no instrumental accompaniment. Then without reading the Scriptures (for the Puritans did not) in the pulpit, he offered a prayer. It did not exceed ten minutes in length. After another hymn, he preached his sermon. It was delivered in thirty, often in twenty-five, sometimes in twenty minutes. Each of his printed sermons comprises two discourses, as they were pronounced. After his sermon, he offered his second prayer. It did not exceed seven minutes in length. In the afternoon but not in the forenoon, he read a third hymn. He included the entire service within sixty minutes. "No conversions after the hour is out," was his motto. He pronounced the benediction, and while his auditors remained standing, he descended the pulpit stairs, and walked through the broad aisle of the house to the front door. He bowed to his hearers as he passed their pews. No military general ever marched with more propriety, if with more grace, through the open file of soldiers.

When this "uniform" man had resigned his pastorate, he treated the occupant of his old pulpit, as he himself had been treated by his hearers. He stood in his pew after the benediction, until the preacher had descended the pulpit stairs, nor would he have moved from his standing place until the preacher had left the house, if he had not been urgently invited to walk, side by side, the old prophet with his youthful successor, between the waiting parishioners on either hand.

### D. — Objections to his Method of conducting his Ministry.

It is objected that, in one point, he deviated from the usage of his Puritan ancestors. They were as remarkable for their length, as he for the brevity, of the pulpit services. In particular, he has been condemned for appropriating too small a proportion of time to distinctive prayer and praise. On this theme, as on others, he had his own views. He regarded not the *length* of a petition, but the *spirit* of it, as its chief excellence. He did not consider the *brevity* of his prayers as indicating their inferior value, more than he considered the small dimensions of the heart as indicating that it is of less value than the arm. He supposed not that the worship of the Sabbath alone, but that the prayers of every day and every hour in the day, that the prayers breathed out in words when appropriate, and in deeds when more appropriate, that this worship of the life was the great duty of man; and that the design of the sanctuary was not merely to unite the people in acts of public

Digitized by Google

devotion, but also to prepare them for private devotion, for an entire life of praise. The mind is fitted for this devotional life by the truth of God, for in his truth dwells his Spirit.

He has been censured for the infrequency of his public services. But he multiplied them, more than they were multiplied by the ministers of his own age. For the *present* times, and for the *present* race of pastors, he might have recommended a different regimen. *He* could do what *other* men could not. He could accomplish in *his* day, what he might fail to accomplish in *our* day. He insisted on the thoughtful coöperation of his parishioners. If *he* had a duty to perform, *they* had one also. If he was bound to *preach*, they were bound to hear and to *think*. He therefore judged, that two good sermons on the Sabbath were sufficient for one day. The evening must be spent in meditation on what the forenoon and afternoon had revealed. He meant that his hearers should receive lessons enough on the first day, to occupy them during every following day of the week. That "*sincere milk of the word*" which the doctrinal preacher set before his people, was to be digested before he prepared for them any additional food. And whenever a religious service was appointed for one of the secular days of the week, his people not only expected, but *desired* that the service be conducted by the bishop himself. He had but few lay-exhorters who would venture to speak often in his presence. The "ruling elders" of his church had not been reappointed since 1742. The President must be the teacher, when the members of his school came together to be taught. Of course, there were some exceptions to this law. The Franklin pastor trained more and better lay-exhorters, than were trained by his brethren who entered the pulpit ninety-two years ago. He never trained any of his laymen, however, to imagine that *they* could prophesy as well as the prophet himself. He stood in a high pulpit, and the pews in his meeting house were on a level.

### § 4. *His Intellectual Influence over his Parish.*

When one reads the preceding Sketches of the Franklin Pupils, particularly of such men as President Chapin, Professor Kendrick, and Dr. Jackson, one is tempted to inquire: "What has all this to do with Emmons?" All this illustrates the scintillating power of his mind, which drew around him men of bright parts and made them brighter still. It is not by accident that great rivers flow by large cities. It is not by chance, that Emmons found himself encompassed with a literary atmosphere in his retired pastorate. Let us consider,

Digitized by Google

A.—His Methods of quickening the Intellect of Men who were associated with him.

It is impossible to specify all the influences which flowed from his fresh thoughts and words. His Table Talk was rich and invigorating. This is illustrated by the apothegms which are scattered through the present Memoir. The parishioners who so often enjoyed the hospitality of the parsonage, were stimulated by his Socratic Method. The annexed narrative of his conversation with a minister, may be regarded as a specimen of his conversation with many a layman.

A young clergyman and his wife, soon after their marriage, paid a visit to the aged divine, and during the afternoon he took out his large manuscript of questions, saying playfully, "I must examine you, and see if you are orthodox." They had often visited him separately, and held long conversations with him, and they enjoyed the prospect of being questioned by him now, for they expected that he would evolve some great truth. After replying to his first question, they eagerly asked if the answer were correct, as they supposed that the manuscript contained the solutions to its inquiries. "*There are no answers to these questions,*" he replied, with pleasant sarcasm; "I always put these to people who *know,*" and he went on with his examination. They replied very readily, till at length it became evident that he meant to entangle them. They defended themselves with earnestness and ability, but at the same time were fearful that he might become irritated at their persistent opposition to him. Just as they were beginning to feel that it would hardly be respectful to continue the controversy, he surprised them by a smile of approbation, saying: "I like you. You do your own thinking, and you are not afraid to avow it. Now, always remember, you have as good a right to your opinion as *any* man, *no matter* WHO he is; and don't you let *any* one beat you off your ground, except by a *better reason.*"

His grand rule for enlivening the intellect of his parishioners, was to make the doctrines of the Bible *prominent.* He was *determined* to make his people *attend* to these doctrines. He was resolved to make his church *a school.* In this view he did keep a "Sabbath School." He feared, that amid the noise of the machinery of philanthropic societies, men would lose those meditative habits on which the success of these societies depends. He aimed first to *win* his hearers to the truth which educates the soul. He was willing to forego often the luxury of such investigations as would attract the regard of philosophers, if he could wake up illiterate men to a bright intellectual life. Hence he not seldom cast his thoughts in the moulds fitted for children. In discoursing from the text, "If I wait, the grave is my house," he says: 1. The "grave is a very *spacious* house;" 2. It is "not only very spacious, but very *dark* and *dreary;*" 3. It "is a house of *silence* as well as darkness;" 4. It is "an *empty* as well as silent house;" 5. It "is a house of *corruption;*" 6. It "is a house of *oblivion.*" When we peruse many of his simple discourses on "*Tasting* Divine Goodness," on the "Dispersion at Babel," on the "Trial of Abraham," etc. we are reminded of the lines:

Digitized by Google

"And, as a bird each fond endearment tries,
To tempt her new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."

The Franklin disciplinarian, however, was conversant with the old fable ending with the moral: "If grass will not answer, I will see what stones can do." It has been said of him in his family, that, "like a good charioteer, he governed principally by the reins." It was so in his parish. Still he sometimes used the whip. He would persevere in *winning* men to think of the truth, but when he could not allure, he resorted to stringent measures. It is affecting to meditate on his childlike simplicity of character, on the singleness of his aim to "*fulfil his ministry*," on the absorption of his whole soul in the welfare of his people, as these traits are illustrated by the following incidents:

On a sultry day in the summer of 1790, while he was reading his discourse on the Sabbath, he saw, or thought he saw, that his people, wearied probably with the labors of the hot week preceding, were inattentive to his well reasoned words. He shut his large thick note-case, and said, "I shall not preach again in this house, until I can be assured of better attention from my people." He then took up his hat and walked out of the sanctuary. In alluding to the incident afterward, he remarked: "I meant that both my people and myself should either gain or lose; they should gain a minister more faithful than he had been, or else lose a minister who always had been laborious; and I should gain an audience more attentive than mine had been, or else lose an audience which had generally shown a respect for my wishes." This movement of the pastor caused much emotion among the people. The following record is found in the church books:

August 3, 1790. "The Church met agreeably to a notification the Sabbath preceding. And after the pastor had explained the grounds and motives of his conduct on the Lord's Day, July 18, in dismissing the assembly before he had gone through the usual exercises of the day, and after the matter had been considerably canvassed by the Church, the two following votes were put and passed in the affirmative:

"1. That it is reasonable, the Pastor should insist upon having proper attention of the People, in the time of public worship.

"2. That it is reasonable, the Church should desire and endeavor that proper attention be given in time of public worship, and discountenance all inattention."

Twenty-six years after this commotion, we find the following record on the church books:

"December 29, 1816. The Church stayed at the close of public worship, when the pastor stated to them, that there had been apparently designed inattention that day in the time of public worship, but did not [mention] any supposed faulty person. After some conversation on the subject, the pastor requested the church to meet on the next Wednesday at one o'clock, P. M., to take the subject under consideration."

"Wednesday, Jan. 1. The Church met according to appointment. After the meeting was opened, the pastor read the following paper:

"Brethren, — When I became your Pastor, I supposed that a mutual relation between us then commenced, which laid us under mutual obligations to discharge vari-

Digitized by Google

ous duties towards each other. I was bound on my part to preach the gospel to you statedly, from Sabbath to Sabbath, so far as my health and other circumstances would permit, and to perform all other religious services, which belong to the ministerial office. On the other side, I supposed you were bound to attend public worship statedly, from Sabbath to Sabbath, so far as your health and other circumstances will permit, and to attend with decency and propriety. And upon the ground of these mutual obligations, I have always supposed it properly belonged to me to insist upon order, decency, and attention in the time of public worship. But it seems I have frequently given offence by calling for attention, and in particular on the last Sabbath, which led me to appoint the present meeting.

"I consider inattention in time of public worship, as detrimental to me and to the faulty persons, and as tending to alienate the affections of the people from me, and consequently to put an end to my ministerial influence in this place, which I greatly deprecate. Now, brethren, I wish to know whether by my conduct on the last Sabbath, or at any other time or times, I have forfeited your confidence, your approbation, or your assistance in my ministerial office? The reasons for desiring to know your opinion upon these points, might be mentioned, but I believe they are too obvious to all to require a particular mention. I now refer it to your wisdom to determine whether any, and if any, what means should be adopted to give me assurance that I may safely lean upon your concurrence and assistance in my ministerial work."

After a due and deliberate consideration of the subject proposed, the Church passed the following votes, namely:

1. It is inconsistent, with our covenant engagements to bring up those under our care in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to suffer them to attend balls and places of vain amusements.

2. Voted to recognize the two following votes, passed by the Church, August, 1790. [Here the votes are repeated as printed above.]

3. Voted that the pastor has not forfeited the confidence, the approbation and assistance of the church in his ministerial office, by his conduct on the last Sabbath, or at any time or times.

The foes of Dr. Emmons have often censured him for these movements, and especially for that passage of his sermon which was a passage out of the meeting-house. But the measure was no more objectionable, than the hundred devices to which ministers often resort for gaining the ear of the multitude. They advertise their sermons in the newspapers; or they announce quaint and startling texts, or odd and outlandish propositions; or they preach on the burning of a ship at sea, or on the concussion of rail cars, or on Agricultural Fairs, or the Electric Telegraph, or the Atlantic Cable. One minister has cried out from the pulpit, "*Fire*," and having waked up the sleepers, has pursued the even tenor of his discourse. Another has exclaimed with a stentorian voice, "Mark," and then has almost whispered the remainder of the passage, "the perfect man and behold the upright;" and thus he has waked up the sleeper whose name was Mark; still another has delivered half of an elaborated sermon, and then thrown the manuscript behind him, taken a new text,

Digitized by Google

begun an entirely new discourse, entreating his congregation that, as they had slept through the half of a written address, they would now listen to a fresh extemporaneous one. Being a miller's son, Dr. Emmons might have felt that he had more right than Rowland Hill, to stop his discourse and say, "I have heard that the miller can sleep while the mill is going, but if it stops it awakens him. I'll try this method." The incumbent of Surrey Chapel spoke thus, and sat down; and when his hearers were awake, he resumed his preaching.

It is needless to say, that the measures adopted by the Franklin pastor to secure the attention of his people, were eminently successful. Let us then consider

B. — The intellectual Results of his Pastorate.

Alford, the English Commentator, after perusing an American novel, remarked: "The picture which it gives of Calvinistic life in New England, is most interesting and informing." So far as this novel is founded on fact, it has a large part of its basis in the community trained by Emmons. Some of its most fascinating characters are drawn from his parish. "He made the most intelligent yeomanry in New England," is the remark of an eminent scholar who spoke from a personal knowledge of the Franklin farmers: "They were not so genial as they were acute; not so charitable, as they were sharp in their judgments; but they were well informed, and some of them were profound thinkers." We may learn the influences pervading the parish from the following notice of Hon. Jabez Fisher, a Franklin farmer, a member of the Provincial Congress at Salem in 1774, and of that at Cambridge in 1775. Dr. Emmons wrote concerning him in 1806:

"He became, as he supposed, a subject of special grace, at the commencement of the great and general revival of religion, above sixty years ago. Not long after he made a profession of his faith, he was chosen to the office of deacon, which he sustained for more than fifty years, to the honor of religion and the prosperity of the church. His superior abilities and integrity soon raised him to public notice, and he was, with great unanimity, elected to represent the town in the Legislature of the State, where he continued about twenty years successively, either as a member of the House, or of the Senate, or of the Governor's Council. Though he held these high stations in the most trying times that America ever saw, yet he never lost the love and confidence of the public, who continued to esteem and employ him, until he resigned his seat at the Council board for want of health." — "His candor was equal to his moderation and mildness. He was as ready to hear, as to speak; as ready to learn, as to teach; and whenever he saw reason for it, as ready to follow as to lead." — "He availed himself of every source of knowledge and improvement, and made rapid advances in practical wisdom, while engaged in public business with men of eminence." — "He was no less judicious than candid. He had a clear and quick discernment to distinguish truth from error, right from wrong, wisdom from cunning,

Digitized by Google

and artifice from sincerity. He seldom formed a false opinion of either men or things. He was a self-taught politician, who could foresee what laws and measures would have a salutary operation; but no artful or intriguing men could lead him to aid or approve measures which were detrimental to the public weal."

This gentleman was one of the bosom friends of his pastor. Emmons had another parishioner, long noted for his strength of mind, and his medical, particularly his surgical skill, — Dr. Nathaniel Miller. There were several men and women in the more retired circles of Franklin, who were noted for their intellectual exploits. The mother of Professor Alexander Metcalf Fisher, has been known to perform the mathematical calculation of reducing a load, measuring more than a cord, of wood to quarter cubic inches, without the use of pen or pencil, and without any suspension of her manual labors. Another of his parishioners, Miss Harriet Ware, whose Memoir has been published under the supervision of President Wayland, affords a good illustration of the strong mind as well as sterling principle, which characterized many of the Franklin women. Some of them were vigorous and comprehensive theologians. Probably there never was a parish in which so many women have rehearsed the arguments for the divine sovereignty, while they have been engaged in spinning wool; or in which so many men have speculated on the nature of Rectitude, while they have been gathering the new mown hay. A large number of Emmons's young men commenced a course of liberal study, but were prevented by ill health from finishing it. Of the twenty-five collegiate *alumni* who went from his favored parish during his residence in it, a large proportion have earned a high repute. They are represented by such names as the following:

Peter Hawes, Esq., once a successful lawyer in New York, and an exemplary elder in the church of Dr. Gardiner Spring.

Hon. Asa Aldis, formerly Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Vermont.

Hon. Alfred Metcalf, formerly a Judge of one of the courts in Kentucky.

Hon. Samuel Metcalf Pond, once a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas in Maine.

Hon. Williams Emmons, once a Judge of the Probate Court in Maine.

Hon. Theron Metcalf, LL. D., a Collator and Editor of the Revised Statutes of Massachusetts; Reporter of the Decisions of the Supreme Judicial Court from 1840 until 1847, and Editor of thirteen volumes of these Decisions; since February 25, 1848, an Associate Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts. He has been a distinguished instructor of law-students, and a Fellow of Brown University.

Alexander Metcalf Fisher (see pp. 234–236).

Lewis Leprilete Miller, M. D., and Erastus Darwin Miller, M. D., both of them distinguished medical practitioners, the former in Providence, R. I., the latter in Dorchester, Mass.

Hon. Horace Mann, LL. D., a member of the Massachusetts House of Repre-



Digitized by Google

sentatives, where he is believed to have made the first speech in behalf of Railroads ever made in an American Legislature, and to have been the foremost advocate for that noble Charity, — the Lunatic Asylum. He was a member, and for two years the President, of the Massachusetts Senate; for twelve years a most efficient Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education; a member of the House of Representatives of the United States; President of Antioch College; a voluminous author. The legislature of Massachusetts have authorized the erection of a statue to his memory on the grounds of the State House in Boston.

### § 5. *The Religious Influence of Emmons over his Parish.*

A. — His own Statement concerning the spiritual Results of his Labors.

"Ministers may possess superior abilities, acquire extensive knowledge, and abound in the blessings of Providence; but these things will be no ornament to their peculiar and sacred character, unless they are sincerely consecrated to God upon the altar of a benevolent heart. Those preachers of the gospel, who possess and display the largest measures of holiness, do the most honor to their office, to the cause of Christ, and to themselves."

This was the motto of Emmons; and in his parochial toil, he aimed to enliven the intellect, *for the purpose of enriching the heart*, of his people. After recording the untoward events connected with the Revolutionary war, he writes: "But I should be very ungrateful to God, if, after mentioning so many disagreeable things, I should pass over in silence some very happy circumstances in the course of my ministry. From the time of my ordination to the year 1785, I seemed to labor in vain, and to spend my strength for nought. Though now and then an individual joined the church, yet there was no general and deep attention to divine things among my people. This was a matter of grief and discouragement. I began to despair of ever seeing any considerable success in my ministerial labors, and was brought to feel my entire dependence upon God for a revival of religion. While my mind was in this state, a serious attention to divine things began to appear in the second parish in Medway, which was contiguous to mine, about the middle of November, 1784. In the space of five or six weeks after this, the same serious attention began to spread in my congregation, which continued and increased till April or May, and did not wholly subside for above a year. It was indeed a glorious and solemn season. On the Sabbath, at lectures, and in conferences, the people in general were deeply affected. And though many

Digitized by Google

had high exercises of mind, and were extremely impressed with lively views of eternal realities, yet no disturbance or irregularities occurred. Those who entertained hopes of a saving change, never expressed any enthusiastic fervor or zeal, but manifested a sensible, rational, scriptural joy in God, and delight in religious duties. It could not be ascertained how many were really awakened and convinced. There was, however, an uncommon solemnity upon the minds of the people in general, so that there was no opposition made to the work, by scarcely a single person. There were about seventy who professed to entertain a hope of a saving change, though the whole of that number did not join our church. This revival of religion put a new face upon my congregation, and gave me new courage and zeal in my ministerial labors. Some who had been unfriendly became friendly, and many who had been friendly, became more and more attached to me. I believe I stood in a favorable light among all my people; though probably some were more displeased with my preaching, the more they understood and felt it. Not long after this revival, religion gradually declined among us, though the late converts retained as much life and vigor and zeal as could be expected, and generally gave convincing evidence that they had been savingly taught of God. But in February, 1794, God was pleased again to pour out his Spirit in a more than common measure, but not to so great a degree as in the former revival. It first appeared in one family, in which two or three were hopefully converted. But upon preaching a sermon in that family, the attention immediately and considerably spread; so that in the course of a few months, about thirty professed to find comfort, and finally made a public profession of religion. In consequence of these two spiritual harvests, my church was greatly enlarged, and continues to be the most numerous in this vicinity. At this time, January, 1806, there is awful coldness, and indifference, and stupidity prevailing, both in the church and congregation. On the whole, I have abundant reason to bless God, that he has given me to see so many displays of divine grace, and afforded me so much ground to hope, that I have been made the instrument of some saving benefit to the precious souls committed to my charge." — *Memoir of himself.*

Digitized by Google

B. — Appendix to this Statement.

"God favored me with three spiritual harvests, or revivals of religion, which rendered my church about as large and flourishing as any in the vicinity." — *Memoir of himself.*

The preceding remark was added to his Memoir by Dr. Emmons in 1830. The *third* harvest here alluded to was reaped in 1808–9, when about forty persons were added to the church. No sooner had he retired from the active duties of his office, than he rejoiced in the fulfilment of his own aphorism: "The seed which a faithful laborer sows is apt to come up when he retires from the field;" for as soon as he discontinued his public labors in 1827, the seed which had long lain buried in the dust germinated, and he was gladdened by a *fourth* revival, in which thirty-six persons made a public profession of their faith. In the year 1836–7, he rejoiced in a *fifth* ingathering of the fruits which he had planted. From the time of his dismission to the time of his death, one hundred and thirteen persons were admitted to his church, on profession of their faith, and twenty-seven from other churches. Thus before the decease of the venerable instructor, he had seen four hundred and fifty persons admitted to the "sacred school" for which he had toiled and prayed. His nearest clerical neighbor adds:

"During the fifty-four years in which he performed the active duties of his office, there were added to his church three hundred and eight; thirty-six by letter, and two hundred and seventy-two by profession.

"If it be considered that the greater part of his ministry was during the great declension of religion in Massachusetts, when the enemy came in like a flood, when revivals of religion were little known, and when a majority of the churches in his vicinity were either overrun or torn asunder by the prevalence of Unitarianism and its kindred errors, these facts indicate much more than ordinary success in the conversion of sinners.

"It is well known to the people in the immediate vicinity of his labors, that conversions among his people were much more frequent and striking, than in the neighboring societies generally. His success as a preacher was once a common subject of remark. The number that was added to his church during the long period of his ministry, is not indeed great for these days of revivals and increased population. But for the times in which the vigor of his life was spent, and for the population of the place in which he lived, it was uncommon.

"Though in his best days there were among *his* people as well as every *other*, much sin and many overt acts of wickedness; yet it is well known that his parishioners were remarkable, not only for the depth and consistency of the piety which prevailed among them, but for their industry, honesty, and sobriety, for their observance of the Sabbath, their domestic order and regularity, their attendance upon the public worship of God, and the respect which they paid to all the institutions of the gospel.

"But the greatest success of Dr. Emmons did not consist in the number of sinners whom he was directly instrumental of converting. His influence in preserving his

Digitized by Google

church and congregation from the corrupting influence of error, which in his day undermined the foundations of many generations, was a most important achievement. So thoroughly were they established in 'the faith once delivered to the saints,' that they were not even shaken in their faith by all the various forms of error with which they were assailed, or by the overwhelming popular influence which the friends of the misnamed liberal principles, for a long time exerted around them. Only one or two of his church were affected with the prevailing heresies of the day. And the influence of these was immediately neutralized by the kind and faithful exercise of the discipline of the church. Though the leaven of error began to work in the congregation, and some few expressed their preference for 'liberal Christianity,' 'falsely so called,' yet the great body of the people remained firmly united with the church through all the changes that occurred in the vicinity, and in the face of all the efforts that were made to draw them off from the principles and practices of their fathers." — (Dr. Ide's Memoir of Emmons, pp. 88, 89, 92.)

Seventy-two years after Emmons was ordained, one of his parishioners, Rev. Mortimer Blake, delivered the following words to the inhabitants of Franklin:

The practical operation of our pastor's "views of ministerial duty to his flock has had a half a century to develop itself. And we say, without any disparagement of other policies and other fields, that the town of Franklin has obtained an enviable notoriety" . . . . . .

"We take pleasure in pointing the stranger, passing through our retired town, to the *single spire* surmounting our *only sanctuary* of *God*, in a population of nearly two thousand souls. While other towns have been parcelled out into different parishes of opposite faith, this has hitherto remained united" . . . . . .

"Hardly a case of defection from the truth has ever occurred among those who were turned unto God, under Dr. Emmons's ministry. Here there has been emphatically 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism.' A live advocate of any of the different sects was a rare sight to our youthful eyes." — (Address pronounced June 17, 1846, at the Dedication of the Emmons Monument, p. 10.)

Rev. Abijah R. Baker, another clergyman who was nurtured in the Franklin church, has borne the following testimony:

"If there has lived a man in New England, within the last century, who merited the appellation of a revival preacher in the best sense, he [Emmons] was that man." — "There was one characteristic of the converts under his ministry, which it would be unpardonable to omit. Unlike many in our day, they did not need to be reconverted the next month nor the next year. They believed the doctrine of the saints' perseverance, and their lives were a practical illustration of it. We cannot now recollect, and we never heard our fathers mention, a solitary instance of an apostate among them." — (Memoir of Dr. Emmons, in American Quarterly Register, Vol. XV. p. 117.)[1]

[1] Had we space, we might adduce a hundred incidents illustrating the unreasonable prejudice against the veteran pastor of Franklin. Here is a specimen. "On one occasion, a married daughter of his was travelling in the cars under the escort of a clergyman, who formerly belonged to her father's parish. She was introduced by her



Digitized by Google

It must be remembered that, as has been said of one of his pupils, "he would have admitted more members into his church, if he had not made the examination for admittance so strict." It must be further remembered, that the immigrants into Franklin were few during the pastorate of Emmons, while the emigrants *from* the town were many. Hence he had not the opportunity of making fresh impressions upon new classes of auditors, and thus multiplying the number of those who could ascribe their religious life to his instrumentality. Hence also many of the young converts, who owed their new character to the means which he employed and which the Holy Spirit honored, did not remain with him as his spiritual aids, but left him to labor without their help, while they disseminated his influence through other regions. During the later years of his pastorate, Franklin began to lose its relative importance as a home for farmers, and this proportional decline of its agricultural attractions brought down with it many other interests, and drew forth from the venerable pastor those desponding tones which are so natural to an old man, conservative of the old ways. His melancholy notes are as interesting as the last foliage of an autumnal forest.

C. — His lengthened rural Pastorate is a Lesson of Contentment to country Ministers.

We have seen with regard to education and to missions, that a large part of Emmons's influence was indirect. His field was Franklin, but it was the world also. Rev. William Clark, Secretary of the New Hampshire Missionary Society, has written these memorable words: "If the average usefulness of his pupils has equalled, or shall hereafter equal that of the twenty-nine whom I have known, it may be doubted whether any minister in our land, holding simply the pastoral office, has ever done so much to promote the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom in our country or the world, as Dr. Emmons." Yet this is the influence of a country parson, who thus indirectly encourages other bishops of rural parishes to be contented with their lot.

"When I preach in the city," said the pastor of a metropolitan church,

friend to another clergyman from a neighboring State. The latter, knowing her escort to be a native of Franklin, conversed with him in regard to the town and to its former minister, Emmons. Not suspecting the lady's relationship to the old divine, he very freely expressed his abhorrence of the Doctor's creed, and mentioned, as one proof of its obnoxious character, the influence of it upon the parishioners of Emmons. 'I have,' said he, 'two men in my parish brought up under Dr. E——'s ministry, and they are the worst men in the place. Their wives, however, are the best of women.'

"'What are their names?' asked the lady, who had been an attentive listener.

"The clergyman named them. 'I know them both very well,' replied the lady, 'but unfortunately for your statement, those gentlemen, though natives of Franklin, removed from it at a very early age, and returned only to be married. *They* were not brought up under my father's ministry, but their *wives* were; and I am very happy to hear you bear testimony to such good fruits from his labors.'"

Digitized by Google

"I wear my best coat; when I preach in the country, I take my best sermon." There are many still towns which demand more thoughtful discourses, than are required in the crowded thoroughfares of our land. Less regard to the graces of elocution, to the niceties of style, to the poetical and historical illustrations is needed for the country; but often there is needed a higher regard to the soundness of the argument, and the depth of evangelical truth and feeling.

The life-long example of Dr. Emmons is itself a sermon on the blessedness of country ministers, as distinct from Theological Professors. When the first "Divinity College" was projected in Eastern Massachusetts, certain admirers of Emmons desired that he should be its chief Professor. But he preferred to remain a preacher to farmers. There is a degree of sterling, roundabout sense, and of simple, honest, Christian sentiment among the yeomanry of New England, which is fitted to exert the most benignant influence on a metaphysical theologian. To write plain sermons for a plain people, is an admirable discipline for a philosopher. It tends to make his theology practical. It helps him to understand what he himself means. The Franklin pastor has been often criticized as having a "presumptuous fancy," a "daring, scheming imagination." If he had any tendency to an undue indulgence in fanciful theories, the congregation of solid yeomen was a better school for him than a class of youthful students would have been. It proffered him all the restraints which he needed. He knew that a kite could not rise, unless a string bound it to the earth. "It requires all our learning," says Archbishop Usher, "to make things plain." It requires less learning and less power to propound mystical theories, and garnish them with a dazzling rhetoric. For a bold metaphysician to retain a parish of eager listeners, during more than half a century, among shrewd, strong, intelligent, laborious yeomen; to make them and to leave them desirous of knowing more and yet more of those great doctrines which have for ages puzzled the schoolmen and the sages; to preach these comprehensive truths in a style so lucid and so practical as to give the religious element a predominance over the scientific, is a work not less profitable to the author himself, than it is monitory to his readers.

We are aware that a change has come over us, and that a country parish is not all that it was once. The able-bodied and strong-minded man, who lived in an "upright house" on the distant hill-top, and owned a hundred and fifty or two hundred of the "paternal acres," who was not only a skilful farmer, but was also a tolerable carpenter, and a decent blacksmith, and a passable wheelwright, and was able, if he had need, to mend or make a shoe, and was withal a Justice of the Peace, and chairman of the Selectmen, and sometimes Representative or Senator in the "Great

Digitized by Google

and General Court," and perhaps a member of the Governor's Council; who was also a deacon of the church, and a member of the "Standing Committee," and often a Delegate with his pastor to an Ecclesiastical Council, — that man has emigrated to the West, and has become a Member of Congress, and the tranquil parish of his early love sighs for him in vain. Still, with all the changes introduced by railroads and cheap prairie land, — a rural pastorate in New England may be an Eden to a practical divine.

### § 6. *Illustrations of his Ministerial Piety.*

"To preach well, it is necessary to live well. To preach like Christ, it is necessary to live like Christ. Christ lived the minister. He carried the minister into all companies." "Remember that Christ your Lord and Master, will keep his eye upon you and watch you every moment. He will be with you in the study, and observe you in your private preparations. He will attend you to the pulpit and hear you preach. He will sit with you at his table, and observe your behavior at the head of his family; and he will accompany you among the people and mark all your conversation and carriage against the day of judgment. Let Christ then be always in your eye and in your heart. Converse with him, consult him, and engage that gracious presence of his, which he hath promised to all his faithful ministers. Often ask yourself, 'how would Christ preach? how would Christ live? how would Christ converse? how would Christ behave under this trial or that trial? how would he treat this church and congregation were he in my place and situation'? and always aim to follow the example of Christ, both in living and in preaching."

This is the solemn charge addressed by the patriarch of Franklin to one of his pupils. He applied the motto to himself. Those who had the most intimate acquaintance with him as a *man*, felt the highest reverence for him as a *Christian*. His piety in his own house, retained its glow when he was in the house of God. It was acknowledged most fully by those who listened to him most frequently.

Perhaps it is difficult to find more characteristic illustrations of his clerical virtue, than are given in the words which he uttered on the days commemorative of his entrance upon his pastorate. At the present time, many a minister is well-nigh glorified in the literal sense, when he has filled out a quarter of a century in one parish. Amid solemn parade, he listens to encomiums which would be more appropriate for the angels in heaven. The patriarch of Franklin was sensitive, perhaps too sensitive to any disrespect for his office, but he could never have inbreathed such incense as is offered to the more juvenile patriarchs of our day. He cast his eyes backward on his ministerial course with awe, penitence, and trust in God. His modest, unassuming spirit, his conscientious fidelity, his sense of justice, his fear of Jehovah, his love to men, his

Digitized by Google

determination to labor more and more for his Redeemer and his brethren, are photographed in utterances like the following:

*Address at his fifty-first Anniversary.* — "Every thing tells me that I have almost finished my course, and the time of my departure is at hand. This day finishes *fifty years* of my ministry among you. I must soon leave you, and you all must, one after another, follow me into eternity, where the serious consequences of our long mutual relation will be seen and realized forever. These cannot be judged before the time. But is there not ground to hope that some of us have fought a good fight and kept the faith, and that we shall have a joyful meeting in the mansions of the blessed, and receive a crown of righteousness which shall never fade away?

"Though we have lived in a very eventful period; yet nothing very extraordinary has happened [among us] which deserves particular notice. Your Pastor entered into [a] vineyard, which had been well cultivated before he came into it. He has had peculiar motives to labor here with diligence and activity. He hopes he has sown some good seed which in time to come will spring up and bear fruit unto eternal life. He gratefully acknowledges that he has had the pleasure of seeing several small harvests. God has graciously smiled upon the pastor and people during *fifty years;* which is a long period of ministerial life." . . . .

"In reviewing what is past, we have all undoubtedly much cause to lament our great negligence, unfruitfulness, and unfaithfulness, in the service of God; and no less cause to fight the good fight of faith with increasing vigor, fortitude, and zeal, till we have finished our course, and entered into everlasting rest."

*Address at his fifty-second Anniversary.* — "Now, my hearers, I ought to recollect and you ought to recollect, that I have been in my watch-tower here fifty-one years.

"In the course of this long period many souls have been committed to my watch and care; many more than will ever be committed to my trust again. I am still responsible for those who have gone the way of all the earth, though they are now entirely beyond the influence of my preaching and prayers, and the preaching and prayers of any other man on the face of the earth.

"But I am still in my watch-tower, and the solemn and responsible duty of watching for your souls, lies upon me with redoubled weight. The past neglect of duty, and the present decays of nature, and the nearness in which I, and some of you at least, stand to eternity, remind me of my increasing obligations to fidelity. Though you may complain of my past unfaithfulness, surely you cannot reasonably complain of my future watchfulness and fidelity.

"Methinks I see dangers approaching, and grievous wolves entering in, not sparing the flock. And the danger I see, or think I see, I must warn you of, let it come from what quarter it will. I am responsible for warning, and you are responsible for taking warning. — Brethren, the time is short, precious, and important. Death is at the door; and when that comes we must go to our long home, and give up our account with joy or grief."

*Address at his fifty-third Anniversary.* — "This day closes the fifty-second year of my public ministry among you. You called me to preach the gospel, which is the word of God, plainly and faithfully to you. I accepted your call, and engaged to preach the gospel plainly and faithfully to you. You engaged on your part, to hear

Digitized by Google

me preach the gospel, not as the word of man, but as the word of God. The serious mutual question before us is, Have we fulfilled our mutual obligations?

"I think I can safely say for myself, that I have endeavored to preach the gospel as plainly and fully as I have been able. I have not meant to keep back any thing, which I thought would be profitable unto you, nor shunned to disclose all the counsel of God, so far as I understood it. I have taken pains to understand, explain, defend, and inculcate the important doctrines and duties of the gospel, in the best manner I could, for the benefit of saints and sinners. In respect to preaching the gospel plainly, I am not conscious of very great deficiency.

"But whether I have preached the gospel *faithfully*, is a more serious and difficult question for me, and more difficult for you, to answer. To preach the gospel faithfully implies a great deal. It implies supreme love to God, and a disinterested regard for the good of souls. I am conscious that I have failed, that I have often failed, and that I have greatly failed, but I hope not entirely failed, of preaching the gospel faithfully. I have rejoiced when I have seen any cordially embrace the gospel as the word of God; and I have lamented when I have seen so many receive the gospel, as the word of man, and make light of it; but whether my joy and sorrow have flowed from pure love to God and the souls of men, I feel to be important to determine, and to determine according to truth. My deficiencies, however, in fulfilling my obligations to you, and to God, in preaching the gospel plainly and faithfully, call for my humiliation and godly sorrow.

"It is yours now to inquire, whether you have faithfully fulfilled *your* obligations to *hear* the gospel as the word of God, and not as the word of man. You as really engaged to hear me preach constantly as I engaged to preach constantly. . . . .

"My hearers, the question is before you, whether the breach of obligation lies upon you, or upon me. It is a melancholy truth, that religion is decaying among us. Are there no secondary causes of it? Preaching appears at present to do but very little good. Must it not be owing to the preacher, or to the hearers? It highly and mutually concerns us to search out the cause or causes of the decay of piety, virtue, and morality among us. Why does iniquity abound? Is it not because the love of many waxes cold? Why does the love of many wax cold? Is it not because the means of grace are not used, or not improved, and divine ordinances are despised and neglected?

"It is affecting and humiliating to compare our religious state at present, with our religious state fifty years ago; and if we look forward, a more dismaying prospect presents itself to our view. There is reason to fear from what is past, that I shall be more and more deficient in preaching, and that you will be more and more deficient in hearing the great and precious truths of the gospel, and that we shall suffer religion to die in our hands, and the blood of souls will be required of us. We are all acting for eternity, and it behooves us by the faithful discharge of duty to prepare to give up our great and last account with joy, and not with grief."

These are the pensive words of an octogenarian, who teaches that "the essence of *humility* consists in *self-abasement*." He loved "to take the lowest place which he could find." Hence his closing words are like the notes of the dying swan. In his best days he said: "I never stand up in the pulpit without trembling." In his last days, he could not speak of his ministry as candid friends would speak of it. He was a conservative

Digitized by Google

man; he loved to recall the scenes of his boyhood at Millington; he could not sanction the change of manners which had come over the land since he worshipped with the relatives of Brainerd on Millington hill. "Those good old times,"—there was none like them in his view, and his preaching was tinged with melancholy at their departure.

### § 7. *Apothegms illustrating his Ministerial Wisdom.*

"No hungry minister or parishioner ever called on the pastor of Franklin, without receiving a loaf of bread to carry home."—The following are crumbs that fell from his table.

"Ministers should be more than free from vice; they should be virtuous. They should be more than virtuous; they should be pious. They should be more than not condemned of the world; they should condemn the world."

"Good men as well as bad *are* able to do any thing which they *think* they are able to do. Difficulties vanish before resolution."—"Five men *united* in a parish can do any thing for or against a minister."

"Saints govern all the affairs of the world, so far as creatures have any agency in governing the world."

"Christians have far stronger motives to be industrious in their secular calling, than sinners have."

"Let a minister take good care of the Gospel, and the Gospel will take good care of him."

"Money destroyed one apostle, and two of the primitive church-members."

"The minister must move, before his people will move; he must feel before they will feel; he must *seek* his end, before he can possibly attain it."

"A wise man *takes* advice, but does not *follow* it without examination."

"It is unwise and dangerous to force nature."

"Though God has immensely more laboring for him in his vineyard every day, than Solomon had laboring for him while building the temple, yet God has not a single laborer to spare."

"General reformations always begin with individuals."

"An undedicated saint cannot be found."

"Piety, poetry, and music, are intimately and happily united."

"The conduct of men is oftener a *cover*, than a *display*, of their real feelings."

"Every circumstance that tends to indulge one corruption of bad men, tends to restrain another."

Digitized by Google

"When a young prince is born, all the kingdom feel the importance of his education, and are anxiously concerned to have the ablest instructors employed, to form him for great and noble actions. But you have more than princes, even young immortals, committed to your care, whose powers and capacities, whose dignity and importance will astonish you at the great day, if not before."

"When a parent tells a child not to go near the well, this does not give him leave to run into the fire."

"Eternity levels all distinctions, and raises all immortal souls into infinite importance." — "A minister's habit of viewing his people in the light of eternity, must necessarily raise them all to a level. I do not say, *sink* them to a level, but *raise* them to a level."

"Christians have no more right to neglect to *pray* for their minister, than their minister has to neglect to preach to them."

"Let false teachers pass on your right hand and left, but say nothing to them unless they attack you."

"Time-serving ministers generally have but few hearers."

"Though the Bereans were commended for searching the Scriptures, in order to determine whether Paul preached the truth, yet we have no ground to suppose that they would have been commended, if they had rejected the truth after they had searched the Scriptures."

"No man is to be blamed for acting agreeably to the errors he really believes to be truth, but he is to be blamed for loving and embracing his errors." — "No man ever embraced a religious error as an error, but only as a truth."

"The afflicted may always remember, that whether they do or do not receive benefit from their own afflictions, the world certainly will."

"When a man preaches false doctrine on one Sabbath in my pulpit, then on the next Sabbath I draw an inference against his false doctrine."

"It is the proper business of ministers to *set*, and not to *follow*, example."

"I state and prove that men ought to keep *Saturday*, rather than *Sunday* evening, as a part of the *Sabbath*, and then I let my people do as they please. On all such matters, a minister must *reason* with men, but not *crowd* them." — "I *can* not see why I should keep Saturday evening," said a parishioner. "Then keep Sabbath evening," said the pastor.

"A preacher always carries his *habitual* views and feelings into the pulpit with him. If he conceals the Gospel, the Gospel will not conceal him."

Digitized by Google

# CHAPTER XVI.

## HIS THEOLOGICAL SYSTEM.

HAVING considered the Life Work of Emmons in its outward relations, let us now consider it in its internal principles. We have examined the superstructure; let us next examine the foundations of the edifice. The basis of his discourses in the pulpit and of his discipline in the pastorate, was his Theological System. The importance of this system has been undervalued. The preceding Sketches of his Friends and Pupils were designed to show, that he moved forth as a giant, with a hundred athletes in his train, and he must have wielded a power which the simplicity of his ways tempts men to overlook. The fact that some of our clergymen who are now in the meridian of life, were once familiar with him, leads them to forget his influence over their grandfathers, and great-grandfathers. When Emmons was born, President Edwards and President Clap were, each, about forty-two years of age; Dr. Samuel Mather and Dr. Mather Byles, about thirty-nine years; Dr. Joseph Bellamy, twenty-six; Dr. Ezra Stiles and Dr. Napthali Dagget, eighteen; Dr. Moses Hemmenway, Dr. James Dana, Dr. Benjamin Trumbull, Dr. Stephen West, each ten years of age. He was about one month older than Dr. Jonathan Edwards; three years older than Dr. Samuel Wales, Dr. Joseph Willard, and Dr. Nathan Strong; four years older than Dr. Charles Backus; seven years older than Dr. Timothy Dwight, and Dr. Eliphalet Pearson. Such facts illustrate the long reach of his influence, and the early beginning of that career which closed within our own remembrance. Let us then consider



Digitized by Google

## § 1. *The Historical Aspects of his Theological System.*

### A. — His early Services in the Infidel Controversy.

It is easy for an ungrateful public to forget, that one of the chief labors of Emmons was in resisting the Infidel spirit which began to prevail during and after the war of the Revolution. The tendency of this spirit was to degrade the clerical office. In struggling to preserve the clerical dignity, Emmons toiled and suffered more than we can easily describe. He wrote in 1795: "A loose and infidel spirit prevails more or less everywhere, and especially appears in opposition to faithful ministers." He wrote in 1797: "The corruption of the times appears in nothing more visibly, than in the united opposition of the people to sacred things, and to sacred persons. They seem determined to bring down ministers, and make reprisals upon them, for their having so long possessed the public esteem and confidence." He often remarked: "Once the people believed what the minister says, because he says it; now they disbelieve what the minister says, because he says it." Emmons early became familiar with the writings of Herbert, Tindal, Bolingbroke, Gibbon, and Shaftesbury. He studied the theories of Illuminism, which emanated from Adam Weishaupt, of Ingolstadt, as early as 1780. He was particularly conversant with the writings of David Hume. His Sermon on Job 11: 7, printed in 1793, and entitled, "God Incomprehensible," was especially designed to combat Hume's Dialogues concerning Natural Religion. Another of his discourses contains an elaborate refutation of Godwin's Political Justice. In October, 1796, the Mendon Association published a volume on "the Evidences of Revealed Religion," of which Dr. Emmons wrote the Chapter on Miracles. He was one of our foremost divines in giving a preëminence to the Internal Argument for the Bible. He said in 1804, that the *doctrines* of the Bible "afford the strongest internal evidence" of its truth, "and carry greater conviction to the minds of common Christians than prophecies or miracles, or any other mere external proofs of Christianity." "It is impossible for any man in the world to understand the Gospel and yet disbelieve it." "If a man will allow himself to examine, or suffer himself to be taught, the great and distinguishing doctrines of the Christian religion, so as really to understand them, he cannot resist conviction, but *must* believe them to be true, whether they are agreeable or disagreeable to his heart. If the heart does not prevent the *exercise*, it cannot prevent the *verdict* of reason."[1] His firm conviction, that "if we can only make men understand

[1] See also, Works, Orig. Ed. Vol. VII. p. 528.

Digitized by Google

the Gospel, we may be sure we have gained their everlasting belief," led Emmons to his style of plain, *explanatory* discourse. "It is said of Paul, in distinction from all the other apostles, that he *reasoned* in his preaching," and Emmons aimed to unfold the full meaning of the Bible, because he believed that "the faithful preacher always has the reason and conscience of men on his side," and a "reasonable religion will take hold of these inflexible powers of their *minds* in spite of their *hearts*," and sinners *will* hear, even while they hate, what they believe to be true and important.

It may be added, that the entire doctrinal course of this self-consistent divine was shaped by his stringent theory of Inspiration. He believed that the Divine Spirit "dictated the very words" in which the Divine truth was expressed; that "the Holy Ghost *suggested* every thought and word to the sacred penmen, all the while they were writing the Holy Scriptures;" that "inspiration, in every degree of it, always means something which is truly supernatural and miraculous." He was not moved by the objection that the original phrases thus dictated were to be afterwards translated; but he says: *Upon this very ground*, "we may reasonably suppose that the Divine Spirit dictated every thought and word to the sacred penmen, to prevent gross errors and mistakes from finally creeping into their writings by frequent transcriptions and translations." This strict theory of Inspiration led him to accept every doctrine of the Bible as accurate, whether it could be substantiated by reason or not. For, he says: "If what we have endeavored to prove be true, that every word and sentiment of the Bible was immediately suggested to the sacred penmen by the Holy Ghost; then their writings are, strictly speaking, the word of God; and to appeal from their writings to reason, is the same as to appeal from God to man; which is absurd and criminal in the highest degree." On the same principle, Dr. Emmons insisted that the *style* of the Bible should be the *style* of our theological treatises, and hence he justified his assertions that God "hardens the heart," "creates our choice." It was by the reasoning of Dr. Emmons on the inspired language, that Dr. Woods of Andover was influenced in repeating so often his favorite rule: 'The Bible should be our standard, both in the *matter* and in the *manner* of our teaching.'

### B. — His early Services in the Arminian Controversy.

During the last half of the last century, the orthodox divines were in a constant warfare against Arminianism. No one was more active or efficient in the contest, than Emmons. To no man are the Calvinistic churches more indebted for the defence of their faith. A large part of

Digitized by Google

his published discourses appears to be affected by this controversy. Not so large a proportion of his ordinary sermons was tinctured with it; for his ordinary sermons, being more practical and less controversial, have not been demanded for the press. They are too much like the sermons of other men, to awaken the popular curiosity. While Calvinistic ministers condemn him for giving so great prominence to their distinguishing doctrines, they forget that he was urged to their defence by the activity of their assailants. "The zeal of a man's hearers to oppose and resist the force of divine truth, will increase his zeal to preach it with the greater plainness and pungency." Emmons illustrated the correctness of this, his own remark. He never quailed before his opponents, and he spoke the louder when they attempted to drown his voice. He chose to resist the Arminians by proclaiming the truth which they would undermine, rather than by manœuvres or inuendoes against them as men. He resisted *them* by resisting their *doctrines*, and he resisted *their* doctrines by preaching his *own*. He took a positive attitude, and preached *for* the sovereign decrees of God, rather than *against* the *self*-determining power of man. If he had labored in opposition to *persons*, rather than in opposition to their *teachings;* and if he had labored more frequently in direct antagonism to the doctrine, that men are independent in their relations; and less frequently in the direct maintenance of the doctrine, that *God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*, he would have *seemed* to diversify his life-work more than he now seems to have done. He was no more disproportionate in his zeal for Calvinistic peculiarities, than other controversialists have been. It is natural for the friends of a truth to derive an excess of zeal for it, from the eagerness with which it is opposed. A mother concentrates her affections upon that child who has fallen into the most imminent peril. It is a singular fact, however, that Emmons has been oftener blamed for a one-sided partisanship for "decrees," "election," etc., by those men who enjoy the fruit of his victory, than by those who felt the force of his logic against themselves.

"A one-sided partisanship for 'decrees,' 'election,'" etc.! That Emmons, in his published discourses, has made such doctrines unusually prominent, is admitted. So has he given a bold expression to the correlative or antithetic doctrines. He has not projected one class of truths to a point where they excluded other truths. His zeal against Arminianism led him to exalt a class of principles which explain the Calvinistic creed, and defend it against the charge of fatalism. Arminians are successful in their attack on the truth of Predestination, unless that truth be allied with another; i. e. the natural ability of man to perform all that is required of him. Partly in order to prevent the success of this

Digitized by Google

attack, the Franklin divine brought into a foremost position his doctrine of human ability. Arminians are victorious in their assault upon the truth of man's native sinfulness, unless that truth be allied with another, i. e. the freeness, voluntariness, activity of all sin. Partly to meet this victorious assault, the Franklin divine raised into the front rank his celebrated *dictum:* "All sin consists in sinning." A one-sided advocate of divine decrees and divine efficiency! The quotations in the present Chapter, if arranged in parallel columns, would give ocular proof of the fact, that he aimed to take a comprehensive view of what is fixed and what is free; to make an emphatic avowal of human liberty in order to maintain the truth of divine sovereignty. His perspicacious mind was assured, that unless he made frank avowals of the power of men, as commensurate with their obligation, he could not maintain the Calvinistic creed, as distinct from the Mohammedan; and unless he admitted the active choice of the will in all sin, he could not reconcile the doctrine of sin with the primary beliefs of the mind. It was thus by his very dread of Arminianism, and by his horror at seeing the Genevan citadel surrendered to its foes, that he was prompted to combine free agency with decrees, and to represent free agency in sinning as the very essence of sin. It is everywhere apparent, that in what men call his own Arminianism, he is undermining the *real* Arminian error. He has been stigmatized as favoring the very scheme which he was opposing, and the triumph of which he aided in preventing. That the propositions which have been superficially denounced as Arminian, are uttered by him in the most honest and simple-hearted endeavor to overthrow the very scheme which he has been accused of supporting, is obvious in such assertions as the following:

"It is because Arminians, Antinomians, and Universalists do not understand, or will not acknowledge the distinction between natural and moral inability, or between talents and a heart to improve them, that they run into their different and dangerous errors. And no one can refute them without understanding this distinction." — (Orig. Ed. VI. 94.)

"Those [divines] who disbelieve and deny the native depravity of children, always deny it on the ground of [its] absurdity. But if they [children] do not become depraved before they become moral agents, where is the absurdity of their having free, voluntary, sinful exercises at that time, any more than at any other period of their lives? Upon their own principle, whenever children become moral agents, let that time be when it will, they are then capable of choosing either good or evil; and there is no more absurdity in the idea of their choosing evil first, than of their choosing good first. It is just as difficult for those who maintain that children exercise free, voluntary, holy affections at first, to account for their having holy exercises before they have sinful; as it is for those who maintain that children have free, voluntary, sinful exercises at first, to account for their having free, voluntary, sinful exercises, before they have holy. Both those who deny and those who maintain native depravity,



Digitized by Google

allow that children do not become morally depraved, before they become moral agents; and after they become moral agents, both allow that they are capable of having either good or bad moral exercises. There is no absurdity in either of these opinions."—(Works, II. 624.)

The writings of Emmons are signally useful as a testimony that, in the judgment of one who stood on a clearer mount of vision than the majority of his race have reached, the sternest principles of Calvinism cannot be sustained except on the basis of the truths, that God never requires men to do what he cannot do himself, i. e. work an impossibility; and that he never punishes men except for what they have done. To denounce these truths as inconsistent with Calvinism when they are logically and ethically essential to it, is to stigmatize one of the strongest advocates of Calvinism as ignorant of its very spirit. The influence of Emmons will no sooner be counteracted by such denunciations, than a rock in the sea will be overborne by the froth and fury of the waves.[1]

### C.—His early Services in the Antinomian Controversy.

John Flavel published a tractate entitled: "A Blow at the Root of Antinomianism." Dr. Bellamy wrote a small treatise entitled: "A Blow at the Root of the Refined Antinomianism of the Present Age." These titles suggest one marked feature of Emmons as a divine. His homely rules were: "Lay the axe at the *root* of the tree;" "Strike the nail *full* on the head." He was characterized by *thoroughness* in whatever he undertook. He early saw that one-sided men, fleeing from Arminianism, would rush into Antinomianism. He was not a man of merely one idea. He rose up against the two extremes. He defended the doctrine that Natural Ability is equal to Moral Obligation, because he knew that a denial of this doctrine is the logical precursor of Antinomianism. Why *should* the law require men to do what they have no power to do? He opposed the notion that Christ performed our obedience, and that Christ's holiness is literally imputed to us, and that our sins are literally imputed to Christ, because this notion is the logical antecedent of Antinomianism. Why *should* the law demand of us an obedience which has been already paid, and threaten us with a penalty which has been already borne? There is another method in which this thorough reasoner knocked at the underpinning of the Antinomian faith. No small part of his life was spent in proving, that in the order of *nature* [he also believed that in the order of *time*] simple love is antecedent to repentance, and repentance

[1] See Memoir of Hopkins, pp. 185, 187.—In an unpublished letter of Hopkins to Dr. West of Stockbridge, he remarks: "Booth [the English divine], thinks we in America are inclined to Baxterian and Arminian principles. I think him no better than an Antinomian."

Digitized by Google

is antecedent to faith in Christ; that the faith which the Gospel requires is love combined with trust, and this trust in the atonement depends upon a previous sorrow for sin, and this sorrow depends on a previous love to God and man. Thus he toiled to undermine the very groundwork of the Antinomian creed. His native elasticity of soul made him recoil from Antinomianism with a singular dread. He says:

Men "build a whole scheme of false religion on this ground," that "faith must be before repentance, because sinners cannot repent of sin before they believe their sins are forgiven; but after they believe Christ died for them in particular, and God has forgiven their sins on his account, then they may love God and repent of sin. But such love and repentance flow [*may* flow?] from mere selfishness, and are consistent with entire enmity to God in his true character, and to the whole Gospel rightly understood. It [this faith] is the essence of Antinomianism, which is subversive of all true experimental religion."—(Orig. Ed. VII. 208, 209.) "If we read Hervey's Dialogues, Marshall's Gospel Mystery of Sanctification, The Marrow of Modern Divinity, or many of the writings of the Presbyterian divines in Europe and America [Emmons elsewhere names Chalmers and Irving among the more recent European divines], we find that these authors inculcate the doctrine that faith always precedes love, and lays the foundation for love in the sinner's conversion." They "suppose that men cannot love God before they believe that God loves them, and intends to save them. But the love, the repentance, and all the religious affections which flow from such a faith [i. e. are dependent upon, and would not exist apart from, such a faith], are totally selfish, and diametrically repugnant to all the precepts of the divine law." This religion "is properly called Antinomianism, or a religion against the law of God."—(Works, II. 153.)

D.—His Early Services in the Unitarian Controversy.

Dr. Emmons was one of the foremost men in our land who predicted the irruption of Unitarianism, and prepared the weapons for resisting it. Being a man of speculation more than a man of action; he resorted to argument more than to ecclesiastical processes, for checking the evil which he foresaw. He never attended a caucus designed to form or recommend any scheme of partisan action. He had no taste for what is called "party management." But he "reasoned out of the Scriptures" against the Unitarian forms of belief and speech. His name has not been so often repeated as the names of other men have been, in the roll of combatants against these forms; for he silently cleared the avenue through which many others marched at the beat of the drum. He did not make so much noise as they, for they struck the blows while he held the light. Not that he failed to deal out heavy blows of argumentation; not that he passed through the controversy without giving serious offence to the liberal clergy; but he was conspicuous and was censured for the trains of thought which he started, more than for any speeches which he made, or votes which he drafted, in the Convention or in Councils.

Digitized by Google

One illustration of his anticipatory spirit in regard to Unitarianism, is given in an Ordination sermon which he delivered from Acts 20: 24, and which evoked unfavorable criticism seventy-two years ago. The sermon pre-intimates, with singular exactness, the course which was pursued by the Orthodox churches, a quarter of a century after Emmons drew his sharp lines. Such a sermon would not now arouse any *peculiar* indignation among the clergy of New England; for both the friends and the foes of Unitarianism have become habituated to its cutting words. The interest of it has in some measure faded away, as a spark goes out in the flame which itself has kindled. But when it was first pronounced, it fell as a thunderbolt on a community, which, as early as 1789, had begun to disparage the worth of Creeds, to discountenance the Examination of Candidates for the Ministry, and to cherish a Catholicism which would welcome the Unitarian, as cordially as the Trinitarian belief. On these topics, he made the following terse remarks:

As the Gospel consists of the *doctrines* of grace, there may be a propriety in forming and subscribing creeds. "If I conjecture right [men do not] object against creeds, because they do *not* understand them, but because they *do*."

"It is an alarming circumstance, that ministers have become so remiss in examining candidates for the work of the ministry. They not only approbate them to preach, but even ordain them to the pastoral charge, without the least examination of their religious principles. And some boast of this conduct, under the noble idea of liberality of sentiment." But "modern catholicism is real infidelity."

"If ministers neglect to preach the *doctrines* of grace, they neglect to preach the Gospel;"—so that, if we inculcate the same doctrines and duties which were inculcated by Socrates, Cicero, and Seneca, "*upon the same natural principles*, we deserve the name of *heathen*, rather than *Christian* preachers."

"Men of modern catholicism make no distinction between essential and non-essential doctrines; but universally embrace, in the arms of charity, all sects or denominations of men, who believe the Bible to be the word of God, whether they profess Arianism, Socinianism, Materialism, Universalism, or any other particular system of religious principles. And what is still more remarkable, they are so lavish of their charity to these needy objects, that they have little or none to spare for others who are more strict and Orthodox than themselves. Mr. Locke, in his 'Reasonableness of Christianity,' labors to prove that all a man needs to believe in order to be saved, is this single proposition, *that Jesus is the Christ*. And Dr. Price is equally liberal in his religious sentiments. In a letter to Dr. Priestly, he expresses his most ardent wish that this sentiment might be stamped on every human mind: 'That worth of character and true integrity, and consequently God's acceptance, are not necessarily connected with any particular set of opinions.' Yet this great and catholic divine, in one of his late sermons, first gives a concise and accurate account of the doctrines of grace, and then reprobates them as the most absurd set of principles to be found in the Christian world. This is modern catholicism, which extends to all but those to whom it ought to extend; and which would break down all distinction between essential and non-essential doctrines, that every man may have full liberty to embrace any scheme of religion, however false and absurd."

Digitized by Google

"A pretty bold sermon, sir," was the salutation of Emmons to President Kirkland, as the President was leaving the meeting-house where he had preached the "Convention Sermon," in 1813. "Rather bold," replied Kirkland, "but I followed the example which you set me nine years ago." In 1804, Emmons preached one of his most elaborate discourses before the Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers. He then repeated, what he had often said before, that the "indiscriminate charity," the "universal catholicism" which fraternizes with essential error, is fraught with peril to the churches. He foresaw that the maxim forming the basis of the Unitarian policy would be: "Men may enjoy a great latitude of religious belief, for they can neither be *required* nor *expected* to think alike on the great doctrines of the Bible." In many of his earlier discourses, he had been striking at this foundation. In his Convention Sermon, he thus endeavors to tear down the bulwark of the concealed but rising Unitarianism.

"The Bible is the word of God; he gave it to be a rule of faith to all; he knew the character, the circumstances, and the capacities of all; it must, therefore, be plain and intelligible to all. To deny this is to impeach both the wisdom and goodness of God in giving us his word." — "The Bible is a magnet which *must* necessarily draw all men to the same point, if they *will* only yield to its attractive influence."

The two doctrines of "God's existing a Trinity in Unity," and of "the Personal unity of humanity and divinity in the glorious Immanuel," "are as easy to understand, though not so easy to explain, as any other doctrines in Scripture. Nor is it any more difficult to remove all plausible objections against these high points in theology, than to remove all plausible objections against the existence of motion, or spirit, or personal identity, or any other visible or invisible object."

"Christians who are united in believing the truth have a right to blame those who think differently from them upon religious subjects." They must disapprove and condemn and in some cases totally exclude "from their communion, such as openly deny the essential doctrines of Christianity." — "There appears to be no propriety in attempting to unite [Christians] in affection, without uniting them in sentiment."

God has given to Christians a *complete* system of divine truth. He may fitly, therefore, *require* them to believe, not only that *it is* a complete system, "but also to believe all the particular truths, which compose the system. For it would be absurd to require them to believe the system in general, and yet allow them to disbelieve any or all the particular truths contained in it." "And since all Christians have this perfect rule of faith in their hands, God may justly require them to form their religious opinions exactly according to it; which is precisely the same thing as to require them to unite in their religious sentiments. For it is a universal maxim, that when two things agree with a third, they also agree with each other. If, therefore, we say, as we ought to say, that God may properly require all Christians to agree with the Bible, then we must say, that he may properly require them to agree with each other."

Thus did Emmons, in a style like that of Euclid, convince his friends, that they ought to adopt what has since been termed the "Exclusive

Digitized by Google

System." It is a noteworthy fact, that of the churches in New England which participated in the Unitarian movement, a far smaller proportion had been trained by the ministers of his school, than by the ministers of the moderate Calvinistic school.[1] His form of Congregationalism led its evangelical advocates *from*, rather than *to*, the Unitarian views. Of the ninety or a hundred clergymen who studied theology with him, not more than one was suspected of adopting the Unitarian peculiarities. They stood like breakwaters, stemming the tide which appeared almost resistless toward the Arminian and Humanitarian theology. The man to whom these hundred ministers, with their hundred churches, looked upward as to their centurion, may now be ungratefully forgotten, but if his acute mind had reasoned in favor of the Liberal Faith, he would have been fearfully remembered.

Another notable fact is, that while Emmons defended the "Exclusive System" with rare decision, he was conservative and deliberate in his method of commencing the System. His enemies have stigmatized him as a "rash" man. In many respects he was eminently cautious. His enemies have likened him to Hegel; — they might with equal aptness have likened him to Hamlet. He was bold in enunciating a *principle;* he was circumspect in applying it to *practice.* His uncompromising assertions with regard to the Unitarians have been cited in our legal tribunals; see, for example, the New Hampshire Reports of Decisions in the Supreme Judicial Court, Vol. XXXVIII. pp. 16, 21. Some of his assertions are like these: "However amiable in their conduct, or however eminent for talents and learning Unitarians may be, they are not Christians, and have no right to be admitted into Christian churches." (Works, II. p. 155.) He asks: "Is there any essential difference between *their* religious homage, and the religious homage of deists and pagans?" (Works, II. p. 170.) Such decisive remarks had an equally decisive influence. The popular mind is roused by bold, and never by hesitating words. Notwithstanding such utterances, however, this veteran controversialist did not refuse, so early as did some of his brethren, to exchange pulpits with Unitarian clergymen. They were regularly ordained pastors; he respected their office; he was slow to innovate upon the established usage of the churches; he disliked to disturb the good neighborhood of ministers; he made a broad distinction between the "infidelity" of his clerical friends, and the "infidelity" of Rousseau and Godwin; between *avowed* Deism, and a Deism which was merely

[1] "The new divinity has been repeatedly accused of opening the door for the admission of Unitarianism into the Congregational churches. No accusation is more unfounded. It was the chief barrier to its entire prevalence. Of the Hopkinsian churches, none are known to have become Unitarian. This error flourished exclusively among the opponents to Hopkinsianism." — *Blake's History of Mendon Association*, p. 25.

Digitized by Google

*constructive*, and not consciously perceived by its mistaken advocates. He did not pretend to decide, what effect certain peculiarities of character or station may have, in persuading even pious men to deny what cannot be denied by pious men unless they are misled by such peculiarities; see pp. 303, 304, above. He became an earnest opponent of Thomas Jefferson, because Jefferson was an Infidel. He remained a decided friend of John Adams, after John Adams had declared himself a Unitarian. He regarded the logical but unrecognized results of Adams's Unitarianism, as a *different species* of Infidelity from the barefaced creed of Jefferson; yet he believed that the two systems belonged to the same *genus*. He spoke of Unitarians, often, not as Infidels, but as "leaning toward Infidelity." He suffered some fruits and flowers to remain in his garden, which were specifically, but not generically, different from other fruits and flowers which he rooted up at once. He distinguished between *beginning* a process, and *continuing* it when it was begun. Professor Woods of Andover, said of Emmons: "He showed great severity towards every form of false doctrine, but great candor and kindness towards the persons and characters of those whose errors he opposed." In his abstract instructions, he often appeared more radical than his brethren, while in his practical developments he as often appeared more conservative than they.

### E. — His early Services in the Controversy with the Universalists.

John Murray, the noted Universalist clergyman, came to America in 1770, and, after preaching in New Jersey and Rhode Island, began his ministry at Boston in 1773. Elhanan Winchester began his ministry of Universalism at Philadelphia, in 1781. It was in 1783, one year before Chauncey's celebrated publication on "The Mystery hid from ages, or the Salvation of all Men," that the vigilant divine of Franklin printed his first Sermon. This was designed to check the new tendency toward a belief that all men will be saved. It was printed about two years before either of the publications of Dr. West, Dr. Edwards, or Dr. Smalley on the Atonement. Those publications had the same design with his Sermon, and betray such a coincidence of views with it as reflects a high honor on his originality. The resistance which he began thus early to the progress of Universalism, he continued until the close of life. The form of his argumentation deserves far more regard than it has yet received. In many aspects, it is original, as well as profound. Germs of it are discovered in the following sententious remarks:

"Guilt is eternal. A man who is *once* ill-deserving, is ill-deserving *always*, and may therefore be justly punished forever." "The personal suffering of the fallen

Digitized by Google

angels, for nearly six thousand years, has not taken away any of their guilt or desert of punishment, but they still deserve to be punished as much as if they never had suffered the least degree of punishment." . . . . . "Whoever deserves to be punished at all, deserves to be punished forever." . . . . . "God does not *always* punish sinners, when he sees that they *deserve* to be punished, but only when he sees good reasons for punishing them. — He *never does* punish them *merely* because it is *just* to punish them, but only [because] he sees [that there are *other*] good reasons to punish them." . . . . "The perfect *goodness*" of God "disposes him to hate" the "perfect wickedness" of sinners, "and to punish them for it. And as it is his *goodness* that disposes him to punish them, so it will dispose him to punish them forever. If he punished them from a principle of *malevolence* and *revenge*, there could be no evidence that he would punish them forever." — "No *selfish* creature, perhaps, would punish his worst enemies *forever*. Satan would not. His *malice* may be satiated; but *moral rectitude* can never be satisfied without giving sinners a *just* recompense of reward." — "There is no sinner in the world, who is willing that his greatest enemy should be punished eternally." . . . . . "God's punishing sinners will have no tendency to diminish or take away his hatred of them. If his hatred of them arose from selfishness, and was of the nature of revenge, it is true, his punishing them might gradually diminish, and finally take away, his hatred of sinners. Sinners often punish one another in revenge, to such a degree, as to soften and turn their own malignant hearts into compassion towards the objects of their hatred. But as God does not hate sinners from selfishness, so he will never punish them in malevolence and revenge, but only from benevolence which necessarily disposes him to hate them, because they are really hateful." . . . . . "Sinners generally plead that they have not *power* enough to go to heaven, though they *wish*, *desire*, *seek*, and *strive* to go. But the truth is, they are *too* strong, instead of being too *weak*. They are *stout* hearted. They have strength to *avoid* walking in the strait and narrow path to heaven; and to *walk* and even *run* in the broad road to destruction." . . . . . "It is *as easy* for any to comply with the terms of salvation, *as it is to be in heaven*, and cordially unite with the heavenly hosts in their enjoyments and employments." — "There is nothing which God requires men to do in this life, in order to go to heaven, that is harder to be done than to be willing to be in heaven. The difficulty lies not in *going*, but in *being* there. (A sincere desire to be in heaven will certainly carry any person there.") . . . . . "We cannot conceive that any favor can be offered upon *any lower* terms to any person, than his *willingness* to accept it." — "A favor cannot be bestowed upon any who reject it." — "If men are *willing* to ask for pardoning mercy, or *even to receive* it, Christ is willing to bestow it." — "All sinners under the gospel *must* be saved *unless they refuse* to ask for mercy." — "The wicked are punished, because they do not *choose* to be saved. Therefore their punishment is reasonable." — "It is *one* thing to plead to be spared from *going down to the pit of destruction*, and *another* to plead for a *restoration to the forfeited favor of God*. The devils could plead with Christ not to torment them, but they had no disposition to plead for future holiness and blessedness upon the self-abasing terms of the gospel." . . . . . "Though the innocent may claim justice, yet the guilty cannot claim mercy." . . . . . "Some suppose, that after God had separated the *wheat* from the *tares*, he will *ripen* the tares in *fire*, and *reap* a rich *harvest* from the unquenchable *flames*." . . . . . "The common belief in the doctrine of Universal Salvation would not have afforded half so much evidence of its truth, as the common disbelief of it affords of its falsehood." . . . . . "Though Universalists will not be pleased to be called deists, yet they are deists to all intents and purposes; and their doctrine leads directly to deism, and the preaching of it makes more deists than Universalists, among their more discerning hearers."

Digitized by Google

F.—His early Services in the Utilitarian Controversy.

It is thought by some, that Edwards, the *elder*, believed in the Utilitarian theory. It must be confessed that he let a few words fall from his pen, which it is difficult, though possible, to reconcile with his disbelief in that theory. (See Bibliotheca Sacra, Vol. X. pp. 720–722.) It is certain that Edwards, the *younger*, adopted the Utilitarian scheme. So did Dr. Dwight, Dr. Burton, and other eminent divines of New England. The independence of Emmons is nowhere more conspicuous, than in his early and persistent opposition to a theory sanctioned by such venerable names. His arguments against it are not so felicitous as are his arguments against Universalism. In fact, he was not convinced by his reasoning, but by his *intuitions*. *He was a man of intuitions.* His original ideas were quick and bright, and often needed no proof. His Sermons on "Conscience," on "the Essential Difference between Virtue and Vice in the *nature* of things," on "Original Sin," on the "Nature of Sin," on the "Superiority of Men to Animals," on "Holiness Excellent and Valuable," illustrate his early and continued zeal to establish the *Supremacy of Right.* In affirming and reaffirming his views on the *intrinsic* Excellence of Holiness, and the *inherent* Odiousness of Sin, he indicates the early impressions made upon his mind by his townsman Brainerd (see pp. 8–12, above). Some of his sententious remarks on the supreme authority of the idea of Rectitude are the following:

"Moral obligation does not result from the bare *will* of any being whatever, but from the *nature* of moral beings, and their mutual relations to one another, which they are capable of knowing." . . . . . "God has an original and absolute right to punish his reasonable creatures, for doing any thing which is *wrong*, whether he had previously forbidden them to do it or not." . . . . . "The decretal will of God cannot alter the nature of things, or make that right which in the nature of things is wrong, nor that wrong which in the nature of things is right."—"Any mere *positive* law which God has given to any of his creatures, he has a right to abolish or repeal, when a change of circumstances requires it; but the *moral* law *he has no right* to abolish or repeal, under any change of circumstances; because it is founded in the *immutable* relation which he bears to his creatures, and they bear to him."—"No secret purpose, intention, or design of the Deity can annul or diminish our obligation to obey his revealed will."—"Merely God's commanding a thing does not make it right, and his merely forbidding a thing does not make it wrong." . . . . . "We ought to do some things and ought not to do others, because we are *men* possessed of rational and moral powers."—"It is the *moral nature* of benevolence that renders it *morally* excellent; and it is the *natural tendency* of benevolence to promote happiness, that renders it *naturally* excellent." . . . . . "Hume, Darwin, and Godwin, among the infidels, and Law, Brown, and Paley, among the divines in England;" "the philosophers in France and Germany, and many ingenious and learned men in America, professedly maintain that holiness is



Digitized by Google

not, in its own nature, morally and supremely excellent, but is valuable only as it tends to promote happiness. This is an error of the *first magnitude*. It robs God, angels, and saints, of *all* their moral beauty, excellence, and glory."—(Works, II. 348, 350, 677. Orig. Ed. Vol. IV. 226.)

G.—His early Services in behalf of the Theology of Religious Revivals.

"*In three or four seasons of special religious interest among us, I preached more doctrinally than usual, which I found made deeper and better impressions upon the minds of the awakened and unawakened, than loud and declamatory addresses to the passions. Strangers occasionally preached among us in such a manner, but with little effect. Discourses upon the divine character, the divine law, the total depravity of sinners, the sovereignty of special grace, and the immediate duty of submission, produced the most convictions and the most conversions.*" These are the characteristic words of Emmons in a letter to a friend. The preceding Chapter on his Pupils was designed to indicate, that they learned from him the peculiar type of theology, which is appropriate to an awakened religious interest. His early reverence for his townsman, Brainerd, inspired him with an early zeal to cast his theology in those moulds which are fitted to stir up the mind, and arouse the spiritual life. We have space, here, to particularize only three forms of his *Theology of Revivals*

(1) He taught that God never requires of Men, what they have not the natural Power to do.

He expressed this doctrine in the ordinary methods, and in some methods which are extraordinary. A large part of his followers do not sanction the phrase, that "men have natural power to *regenerate* their souls." But so fearful was this practical divine, lest men should excuse their impenitence by the plea of an inability to make for themselves the new heart, that he asserted not only our power to *repent*, but also to *regenerate* ourselves. A large part of his followers do not hesitate to affirm, that the operation of the Holy Spirit in renewing men is *supernatural*. But so jealous was this practical reasoner, lest men should console themselves in quietly waiting for a work which is above their natural ability, and in this aspect supernatural, that he affirmed, with reiterated emphasis: "In regenerating a sinner, the Spirit does not *counteract* any law of nature, nor produce any miraculous effect;" "There is reason to believe that the speaking of regeneration, conversion, or sanctification as a *supernatural* work, has led many to draw a very false and dangerous consequence from it."[1] Such facts as these, and

[1] Works, III. 100, 136; Orig. Ed. IV. 357, 492; V. 117–128, 140, 141, 151–153.

Digitized by Google

such phrases as are found in the ensuing paragraph, illustrate the resolute and unshrinking way in which Emmons guarded his theory of human freedom. The first five sentences in the paragraph are memorable, as they were uttered in a discourse commemorative of Dr. Samuel Spring, and will have an historical value for decades of years to come.

"*Nothing* strengthens the hearts and hands of *sinners* more, than to hear the doctrine of the blessed Trinity denied; the doctrine of the divine decrees denied; the doctrine of the divine agency denied; the doctrine of total depravity denied; the doctrine of special grace denied; the doctrine of unreserved submission denied; the doctrine of *natural ability* denied; the duty of immediate repentance and faith denied; and the doctrine of eternal punishment denied." — "It is not because they are *unable* to accept the terms of mercy proposed in the gospel, that they do not accept them; but it is because they choose to remain rebels, and to justify and defend themselves in their rebellion. Their *plea of inability* is a self-justifying and *God-condemning* plea. It is *virtually charging God with injustice and severity*, and *justifying* themselves in persisting in their enmity and opposition to him." — "Did any garrison ever plead, that they had *not power enough to throw down* their arms, and submit to the superior force of their enemies?" . . . . "Men are *never* under a natural *necessity* of sinning." — "Every sinner is *as able* to embrace the gospel, as a *thirsty* man is to drink water, or a *hungry* man to eat the most delicious food." — "Sinners do not need to be regenerated, to *enable* them to embrace the gospel, but only to *dispose*, or make them *willing*, to embrace it." — "They need no other principle, power, or ability, to do all that God requires, than they *naturally possess*." — They "are *as able*, therefore, to do *right* as to do *wrong*." . . . . "The *non-elect* have as fair an opportunity of being saved as the *elect*." — "The non-elect will forever feel, that they *might* have gone to heaven, if they had *chosen* to go to that holy and happy place, and that *their own* choice and *not the decree of reprobation*, shut them out of the kingdom of glory." . . . . Men "are as able to *obey* any command of God, as to *disobey* it. And if they are able to obey *one* command of God, they are able to obey *every* command of God." . . . . "God has done enough and *more than enough* by the way of means, to make you prepared and willing to die." This is true of *all* the afflicted, "whether they have, or *have not* set their souls and houses in order." . . . . "Men are *persuaded* not *compelled* to come to Christ for salvation." . . . . "They [saints] have *natural power* to *apostatize* from the faith as well as to *persevere* in it." . . . . "*All men are conscious* that they have natural power to *neglect*, whatever they have natural power *to do*." — "So that it *always* holds true, that when God gives them natural power to *fulfil* his decrees, *they have the same natural power to neglect to fulfil them*." — "They are *as able* to love God, *before* they are regenerated as afterwards." (For the preceding and many similar expressions, see Works, II. 364, 365, 366, 368, 369, 383, 398, 422, 426, 427; III. 84, 85, 91, 92, 101, 183, 184. See also, Orig. Ed. I. 110, 111, 156, 162, 252; II. 355, 409; III. 199, 382, 455; IV. 307, 320, 321, 333, 355, 358, 359, 496, 498; V. 123, 137, 148, 153, 390, 391; VI. 79, 211, 415, 480; VII. 91, 92, 93, 484, 501, 503. In the preceding quotations, and in others throughout the present Chapter, the *Italics* are introduced by "the author of the Memoir.")

Digitized by Google

(2) Emmons taught that Sinners not only *can*, but *should*, — and when exhorted *at all*, should be exhorted *uniformly*, to make for themselves the new heart.

It is common, at the present day, to insist on the act of immediate repentance. It was common in former days to insist on some acts preparatory to repentance. Now we exclaim: "This is *the* way; walk ye in it." Formerly men exclaimed: "This is the way to *the* way; walk ye in *this way to* the way." No divine of our own, or of any other land, has done more than the Franklin preacher, to restore the *Biblical* style of exhortation. His sententious words are: "Ministers *have no right* to give *any* direction to sinners, but such as, if sinners follow it, they *shall certainly* be saved." "The *same* directions are to be given to *sinners* as to saints."[1] He was, indeed, an abstract reasoner, but his great aim was to present theology in a *practical* form; to exhibit a creed for the *pulpit* and for the *conference*. It was with the intent of proposing an *operative* System, that he insisted with such resoluteness on the following theories:

a. — *All moral agency consists in choosing.*

This is the doctrine of Edwards, but was made singularly prominent by Emmons. The divine commands regard man as a moral agent; are addressed therefore to his choice; of course, require his instant choice, and that choice should be right. He says:

"Many maintain that moral agency in creatures does not consist in *volition*, but in the *cause* of volition. This is absurd; because it is placing free agency in something which is *involuntary*. How can a man act *freely*, when he does not act *voluntarily*? If a man should move without *choosing* to move, his motion would not be a *free moral action*, worthy of praise or blame. We never feel ourselves to be praise or blameworthy in any case in which we do not *act freely* and of *choice*."

"There can be no *agency*, where there is no *choice* or design."

"Hence we may safely say, that the *agency* of God consists in his *will*, his *choice*, or *volition*; and in nothing which is either the *cause* or *consequence* of his willing or choosing to produce any effect, or bring about any event."

"His agency consists in nothing *before* his choice, nor *after* his choice, nor *beside* his choice. It does not consist in the *cause* of his choice, any more than in the *effect* of his choice." — "Free agency must be the same in all intelligent beings. If *God* can possess no higher moral freedom than freedom of choice, it is very certain that *mankind* cannot possess any higher moral freedom than freedom of choice." — (Works, II. 449, 450, 456, 457.)

[1] See also, Orig. Ed. Vol. I. 162, 167, 245, 246; Vol. IV. p. 528; Vol. V. p. 156; Vol. VI. p. 382.

Digitized by Google

b.—*Holiness does not consist in a good nature, principle, taste, or relish, antecedent to choice; and sin does not consist in an evil nature, principle, taste, or relish, antecedent to choice.*

The defence of this principle was a grand aim of Emmons. It is often supposed, that his main labor was to establish the doctrine of Divine Efficiency. He did endure much contumely in defence of this doctrine; but he suffered more, and studied more in sustaining the proposition, that we should exhort men to instantaneous obedience; and therefore men have no involuntary nature, principle, or taste, which necessarily prevents their immediate compliance with this exhortation. His defence of this proposition is combined with interesting historical items.

His revered friend, Dr. Smalley, had been long noted as a defender of the doctrine, that men have natural power to do whatever God requires of them. But he was also a defender of the doctrine, that sin inheres in our nature viewed as anterior to choice. Emmons early saw, that there is a contradiction between the theory of natural power to do all that is required of us, and the theory of passive and involuntary sin. If our nature be in itself sin, we have no power to avoid all sin. If we have power to avoid all sin, then our involuntary nature is not sin. We have no power to avoid our involuntary nature at once.

About sixty years ago, when governors were theologians, the classmate of Emmons, Governor Treadwell, published a series of Essays, designed to prove that "the inability of sinners to obey the Gospel, and consequently the change in their regeneration are properly physical," "being seated in the nature or physical constitution of the soul;" that sin consists in an evil "temper," and that this temper is "not, nor ever can be, the proper object of choice," for it is "independent of choice and the proper ground of it." These Essays of Governor Treadwell produced a great excitement in New England. Dr. Smalley, the Coryphaeus in maintaining the doctrine of Natural Power, was almost unanimously invoked to refute the Governor's logic. He attempted the work. "*Without admitting a material difference,*" he said, "*between moral depravity and any natural impediment, the whole word of God and all his ways to men must appear involved in midnight darkness. His requiring absolute perfection of such imperfect creatures must appear shockingly unreasonable. His condemning to endless tribulation and anguish every soul of man that doeth evil, when doing evil is what no soul of man can help, would be excessively cruel; his unconditional decrees of election and reprobation, and his having mercy on whom he will have mercy, in effectual calling, arbitrary, partial, and palpably unjust.*" Still, Dr. Smalley persisted in advocating the doctrine, that there is real sin in the evil



Digitized by Google

temper, which lies at the basis of choice and exists antecedently to choice. Hence his reply to Governor Treadwell was vacillating, inconsistent, and feeble. Emmons loved his classmate, and rejoiced in his classmate's power. He loved his theological instructor still more, and he was grieved at Smalley's discomfiture. He loved truth more than all, and he prepared himself to defend the truth against his classmate and his teacher.

Soon after this controversy, another friend of Emmons, Dr. Asa Burton, of Thetford, publicly maintained the theory, that holiness and sin consist in a principle or "taste" existing back of the choice, and forming the ground of the choice. The evil principle or "taste" must be eradicated, before there can be a holy volition. A good principle or "taste" must be inserted in the soul, before there can be any other than a sinful volition. As Emmons believed that all holiness and sin consist in choosing, his scheme was called the "exercise scheme," in opposition to what was called the "taste scheme" of Dr. Burton.[1] He opposed the views of Smalley and Burton, because he regarded them as inconsistent with free moral agency, with the duty of all men to repent of sin *at once*, with the duty of all Christians to urge upon the impenitent the act of *instantly* making the new heart. With this practical aim he affirms:

"Nothing can be more repugnant to Scripture, reason, and experience, than the notion of our *deriving* a corrupt heart from our first parents. If we have a corrupt heart, as undoubtedly we have, it is altogether *our own*, and *consists* in our evil affections and other evil *exercises*, and not in any moral *stain*, *pollution*, or depravity *derived* from Adam. This clearly appears from the very essence of an evil heart, which consists in evil *exercises*, and not in any thing *prior to*, *distinct from*, or *productive of*, evil emotions or affections. The absurd idea of imputed and derived depravity, originated from the absurd idea of the human heart, as being a *principle*, *propensity*, or *taste*, *distinct* from all moral *exercises*. But since every man's corrupt heart is *his own*, and consists in *his own free* and *voluntary* exercises, he ought to repent, and look to God

[1] Dr. Emmons always had a reason for his phrases, even when the phrases were infelicitous. He often said that holiness and sin belong to the heart, but the term, *heart*, is ambiguous, and he used it to denote the choices. He hesitated to say frequently, that all holiness and sin inhere in the *actions* of the soul, because the term, *actions*, is understood to denote the outward, overt developments of the moral agent. He used the word, *exercise*, because it would, as he thought, be more commonly associated with an *internal* operation of the moral agent. Still, he knew that the word often does signify an external act. Thus in Richard Grant White's Edition of Shakspeare, Vol. VIII. p. 291, we find the following Note on a passage of Shakspeare's text (p. 204). Lord Hastings says to the priest:

> "'I thank thee, good Sir John, with all my heart,
> I am in debt for your last exercise.
> Come the next Sabbath, and I will content you.'

The Note adds: "For your last *exercise*." The last word is here used in the same sense which it has in the announcement of a New England prayer-meeting, that 'the exercise will commence at early candle-light.'"

Digitized by Google

for pardoning mercy. And unless he does this, he must perish; for God has said, the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, but the soul that *sinneth, it* shall die."

"If a new heart consisted in a new faculty, *principle*, or *taste*, there could be no more propriety in God's requiring sinners to *change their heart*, than in requiring them to *add another cubit* to their stature. But if a new and holy heart consists in new and holy affections, then there is the same propriety in God's requiring sinners to *change their hearts*, as in requiring them to do *any duty whatever*. Indeed, it is only in view of the heart as consisting in *free* and *voluntary* exercises, that we can see the consistency of the divine commands to sinners with the doctrine of regeneration. While they view the new *heart* as *distinct* from new *affections*, and as the *principle* from which they proceed, they will plead the want of a new heart as an *insurmountable* obstacle, *or natural* inability, in the way of their loving God, repenting of sin, or doing any thing in a holy manner. They will plead that they *cannot* give themselves a new and holy *principle*, or change their own hearts. But as soon as they are convinced that a new heart consists *entirely* in new and holy affections, and that they *need* no new faculty or *principle*, in order to exercise such new and holy affections, they necessarily feel their obligation to make them a new heart and a new spirit, and to obey every divine command. They find they have no excuse for continuing any longer in impenitence or unbelief." — (Works, III. pp. 123, 125, 126. See also, Orig. Ed. I. 162-167, 245, 246; IV. 496, 497, 513; V. 113, 138, 139, 247, 248; VI. 416.)

(3) Emmons taught that the Natural Tendency of Truth is to restrain Men from Sin.

It has been found that, in Revivals of Religion, the doctrines of the Gospel are presented with the greatest power, by men who believe in the natural or constitutional fitness of these doctrines to meliorate the heart. He who has the strongest confidence in the efficacy of motives, will feel the keenest stimulus to apply them and enforce them. This confidence justifies the *exhortations*, and forms a *motive* for addressing exhortations, to those who are dead in sin. It has been supposed that the rigid Calvinist of Franklin, aiming to portray, in vivid colors, the total depravity of men, and their need of an immediate divine interposition for their renewal, was unwilling to allow that the doctrines of the Gospel have the slightest tendency to effect the great change. It has been supposed by others, that he contradicted himself with regard to the influence of motives; for he says:

"It appears to be out of the power of the Deity to convert men by *moral suasion*." — "No moral suasion, or objective light can have the *least tendency* to make [men] willing." "No intellectual light or moral motives which can be exhibited before them, will have the *least tendency* to alter or meliorate their hearts." — "Though the word of God is *suited* and *designed* to make deep impressions on the hearts of sinners; yet it is not powerful and weighty *enough* to break their hearts."

"The law *produced* a surprising effect." The law "*brought*" men "to *genuine* repentance." The law "*subdued*" "the stubborn hearts of thousands." "The doctrines of divine revelation *bowed* the hearts of men to the sceptre of the crucified Saviour." "This was such a signal display of the *power* and *efficacy* of the gospel;" the gospel is "*suited*" to "*subdue* the hearts of all who are opposed to the kingdom of Christ." "It is only in the *view*, and in the love of the divine

Digitized by Google

"The word of God is *equally adapted* to change or harden the hearts of men, and infallibly *does produce* the one or other of these effects, whether they are sensible of it or not." — [The truth is equally adapted to convert men, if they do *not*, and to harden men, if they *do*, resist it.]

law, that God *can*, so to speak, reconcile sinners to himself." "It is through the *medium* of the law, that God begins, carries on, and completes the salvation of sinners." — (Orig. Ed. I. 233; II. 304, 483; III. 496; IV. 554, 555; V. 147, 541; VII. 316, 317, 391–403.)

These affirmations are not inharmonious with each other. Their author distinguishes between a *natural* power and a *moral* impotence, to repent. On the same principle, he distinguishes between the *natural* tendency of truth to make men better, and the *moral* tendency of truth to make men worse if God does not prevent them from *resisting* the truth. He believed that the *natural* tendency of the Atonement is, to awaken a grateful love; but the *moral* tendency of the Atonement is, to awaken new enmity, if God does not deter men from *thwarting* the constitutional fitnesses of the atonement. There is the most animating motive to preach this doctrine of atoning love, because there is reason to hope, that the special influences of the Spirit will accompany the natural tendencies of the preached word, and thus persuade the will. He often said: "Men *must* be converted, unless they *wilfully* oppose the influence of truth." They must press *hard against*, unless they will be overborne by, the force of sound doctrine. He wrote:

"It is not easy to make men of clear apprehension and discrimination believe, that the Spirit of God in regeneration operates upon the minds of sinners *mechanically*, and produces a new natural faculty or principle, in which they are entirely *passive*." . . . . "It is the *natural tendency* of family government to promote family religion." . . . . The "warnings and cautions" given to the saints "are proper and *necessary means* to *prevent* their falling away." . . . . A "realizing sense of the sovereignty of God in afflictions, has a *natural tendency* to excite true submission in every pious heart." . . . . "This is a sighing, groaning, weeping world, and *would be* a penitent world, did not the afflicted put forth *vigorous efforts to prevent* hearing and feeling the powerful and instructive voice of afflictions, and of him who has appointed them." . . . . "But adversity has an opposite *tendency*, to withdraw their [men's] thoughts, their hopes and their dependence from the world, and to *persuade* them to give God the supreme affection of their hearts, and to commit all their temporal, spiritual, and eternal interests into his hand." . . . . "Error, according to the inspired writers, has as great a tendency to destroy, *as truth has to save*, the souls of men." . . . . Faithful ministers insist that God "hath established an intimate and *indissoluble* connection between *causes* and *effects*, *means* and *ends*, both in the *natural* and *moral* world." . . . . The "intellectual *faculties*" of impenitent men "remain uncorrupt. Their perception, reason, and conscience are in their full *strength* and *vigor*." — (Orig. Ed. I. 40, 49, 206; II. 483; III. 119, 197, 201, 202, 243, 323, 496; IV. 87, 525; V. 152.)

Digitized by Google

H.—The early Services of Emmons in behalf of a Philanthropic Theology.

"Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw within the moonlight in his room,—
Making it rich and like a lily in bloom,—
An angel writing in a book of gold.
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold;
And to the presence in the room he said,
'What writest thou?' The vision raised its head,
And, with a look made all of sweet accord,
Answered, 'The names of those who love the Lord.'
'And is mine one?' said Abou. 'Nay, not so,'
Replied the angel. Abou spake more low,
But cheerly still; and said, 'I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow men.'
The angel wrote and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blest;
And, lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest."

These lines have been quoted in praise of a philanthropic religion, by men who contend that the Calvinistic theology is too stiff and strait-laced for any genial and glowing love to men. But the creed of Emmons, while theocratic in an eminent degree, was yet humanitarian, in the best sense of that wronged word. The preceding Chapters on his Pupils and on his Interest in Education and Missions, were designed to intimate the philanthropic temper of his theology. One among the many illustrations of this temper, is found in his theory, that love to men is the logical condition and prerequisite for love to God. This theory lies at the basis of the poetic stanzas which have been just quoted, and which, though inaccurate in form, suggest a deep truth. We are inclined to apply the same remark to the theory of Emmons; and to regard it as not precisely what it should be, but as involving one solid principle,—the principle which started many a philanthropic scheme among his early pupils and friends. He writes:

"I know it has been said, that love to men flows from love to God; but the truth is, love to God flows from love to men; or the love of complacency flows from the love of benevolence. Men are as proper and direct objects of benevolence, as God is the proper and direct object of complacency. He, therefore, who does not love his brother whom he has seen and who is a proper object of benevolence, cannot love God whom he has not seen, and who is the proper object of complacency." "How often do those who relate their experiences, tell us, that the first change they perceived in their minds was the love of benevolence to every person they saw, and the love of complacency to all good men in particular; and *then*, love to the goodness or benevolence of God, which shone in every person, creature, and object, around them." "Do

Digitized by Google

not many Christians well remember, that when they were first regenerated, they instantaneously felt benevolently and friendly to all around them, whether friends or foes, and *in consequence of that*, immediately exercised peculiar love and complacency towards God and towards all who appeared to bear his moral image?" — (Works, III. 94, 213, 214.)

The phrase "cast-iron," has been fabricated for the doctrines of Emmons, as if he intended to run his creed in a stiff, rigid mould. But the benevolent man *meant* to form a mellow, if not a *malleable* system; and to infuse a human warmth into the most abstract speculations. One of his guiding principles was to conceive of the Creator, according to the image found in the created; and he has often reiterated the formula, as profound as it is *humane*, reminding us of the divine *sympathy* with men, of his *fatherhood* and of our *sonship*.

"Power in God is of the same nature as power in man. Wisdom in God is of the same nature as wisdom in man. *Goodness* in God is of the same nature as *goodness* in man. And free, voluntary, moral agency in God, is of the same nature as free, voluntary, moral agency in man. If this be not true, we can form no right conceptions of our Creator, and can never know that *he is* a wise, powerful, benevolent, and active being; for we *derive all our ideas of God from our ideas of ourselves*." — (Works, IV. 452. See likewise quotations from Emmons on pp. 384, 386, below.)

### § 2. *The Formative Principles of the Theology of Emmons.*

We cannot understand the creed of Emmons, unless we consider his aim in propounding it. Let us, then, inquire for the intent with which he stated his various theories. We shall see their *meaning* in their *design*. "In every work, regard the writer's end."

#### A. — He aimed to make his Theology illustrate the Loveliness of God.

The Princeton Review has defended the doctrine, that God requires the non-elect to become holy, that he has threatened them with everlasting pain unless they do become holy, and yet they are literally as unable to become holy, as they are to create a world. The same Princeton Review, after representing, in its own way, certain speculations of Emmons, exclaims: "A horrible doctrine!" "This bold and impious opinion;" "There is a sort of sublimity in the very impiety of his declarations." Now the writer of this Memoir cannot approve of certain "declarations" made by the subject of it; but is happy to know that Emmons recoiled from the doctrine, as too barbarous for the faith of civilized men, that God commands the non-elect to perform what they are as literally unable to perform as they are to create a planet or sun, and God will inflict on them unending agony, because they do not accomplish what is utterly impossible. The philanthropist of Franklin

Digitized by Google

had a moral nature too sensitive for tolerating some other doctrines of the Princeton Review. We may add the following illustrations of his aim to represent his Maker as *fair*, *equitable*, and *lovely*.

(1) He believed that it is not only possible, but it is also easy, to do all that God commands.

Here, this intense writer exceeded the bounds which are marked out by his brethren. Even Dr. Taylor of New Haven has contended, that although it is *practicable*, yet it is *difficult*, for men to bow their will in submission to God. Perhaps Dr. Taylor might admit, that in view of the human *constitution* it is easy, while in view of the human *nature* it is hard, to repent of sin. Emmons does not stop to distinguish, but affirms boldly: "It is *just as easy* for a sinner to *begin* to love God, as to *continue* to love him after he has loved him once; and it is *just as easy* both to begin and to continue to *love* God, as to continue to *hate* him." — "It is *always easier to comply* with the terms of the gospel, than to *complain* of them and *reject* them." "The terms of salvation are just as *low* and *easy* as GOD *could* make them." — (Works, III. 108, 215; Orig. Ed. V. 377; VII. 213.)

(2) He believed that all the Acts of Jehovah are prompted by a supreme Regard to the Law of Rectitude.

We have seen on pp. 373–4, above, that Emmons maintained the supremacy of *Right*. He believed that Jehovah is the grand impersonation of this Idea, and that all the moral attributes of Jehovah are lovely, because they are all harmonious with the rational, eternal, and immutable law of Virtue. One of his most amazing thoughts is, that the Day of Judgment is the day on which the *Most High is to be judged*, and the adjudication is needful *for the Creator* as well as for creatures, and will compel the most unwilling to confess, that even the minutest acts of their Sovereign are *fair*, *equitable*, *beautiful*, *noble*, *altogether lovely*, and altogether fit to be *disclosed*, *revealed*, *opened in the light of the Final Scene*. Some of his remarks with regard to the rectitude of his Maker are:

"There is more of *moral excellence* and *worth* in one exercise of the Divine benevolence, than in all the benevolent exercises of holy creatures through eternal ages." . . . . "The guardian angels have always been acquainted with his [Jehovah's] conduct towards every individual of mankind, and have always been the most impartial, benevolent, and competent judges of the divine conduct, towards those who were committed to their care. And if they had seen *a single instance* of malevolence, injustice, negligence, or want of benevolence, in the dispensations of divine providence and grace towards any of the children of men, *they would not unanimously cry*, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.'" . . . . "It is

Digitized by Google

true, indeed, that God is a sovereign, and has a right to act as a sovereign, in governing all his creatures and all their actions. But may we suppose that his sovereignty *allows* him to do *injustice*, or treat any moral agents contrary to the *eternal rule of right?*" — "His sovereignty is *limited* by his *justice*, in his treatment of moral and accountable creatures." — (Orig. Ed. III. 120, 224, 248; IV. 488; VI. 106.)

(3) He believed that all, even the severest Acts of Jehovah, are prompted by Infinite Love.

That the Franklin divine adopts a severe method of describing certain divine arrangements, we do not deny. Were we to affirm that he never errs in his rigid style, we should represent him as nearer to the perfect standard than he supposed any man to be. But he *intended*, that all the hard features of his system should be enlivened and softened by the inner *love which is its soul*. When we complain of his harsh terms in portraying the vengeance of God, we must remember that he regards this vengeance as *one form* of kindness; and all the woes inflicted by it, as emanating from the tenderest love to sentient beings. It is not usual to find in the writings of real Calvinists, such clement phrases as the following:

Pious men "believe that God always treats them, and *all other men*, as well as *infinite wisdom and goodness can* treat them." . . . . "God represents his punitive justice, as the *necessary* fruit and effect of his *infinite* goodness and *mercy*." . . . . "If God cannot seek his own glory in any other way than in displaying his *goodness*, then to seek his own *glory* to the highest degree, is *the same thing* as to give the highest expression of universal and disinterested *benevolence*." . . . . "God's *goodness* will shine brighter in his conduct towards *sinful*, than in his conduct towards *holy* beings. More of the *heart* of God will be seen in the work of redemption, than in all his other works." . . . . God "always did and always will feel as much benevolence towards those who are lost, as towards those who are saved." . . . . God's "love to his *creatures* can *no more fail* than his love to *himself*, because it is pure *disinterested* love, which regards *their* good *as* his own." — "*Vindictive* [i. e. vindicative] justice flows from the pure, *disinterested*, and universal *benevolence* of the Deity; and every expression of it in punishing the guilty, gives unequivocal evidence that he has a supreme regard to the highest *good of all* holy beings, and is willing to sacrifice the good of *individual* transgressors for the blessedness of his holy kingdom; which reflects the highest glory upon him." . . . . And what a great *favor* it is that he restrains the malignant spirits of the regions of darkness from appearing, and wreaking their vengeance upon any of the living inhabitants of the world? . . . "His decree of reprobation *originated* in the same *benevolence* in which his decree of election originated. So that there is the same reason to believe, that he will carry into effect his decree of reprobation, as there is that he will carry into effect his decree of election." . . . "The more holy he is, the more must he hate sin. The more *benevolent* he is, the more must he hate *selfishness*. The more he *loves* the happiness of sinners, the more he must *hate* them for *destroying* it. The more he loves the good of their fellow men, the more he must hate them for opposing it." — He feels "*benevolently* toward them, while he manifests towards them the tokens of his everlasting displeasure." — (Works, Orig. Ed. IV. 254; V. 219, 307, 576; VI. 66, 67, 156, 181, 183, 305, 491.)

Digitized by Google

B. — Emmons aimed to make his Theology illustrate the Supremacy of God.

It has become popular to declaim against *Anthropology* as usurping the place of *Theology*. In an emphatic sense, the writings of Emmons are *theological* as distinct from *anthropological*. He exalted Jehovah upon the throne of *Sacred Science*. To an unwonted extent, his discourses are on the excellence and blessedness of the Universal Governor. — It has become fashionable to declaim against *Ethics* as intrenching upon the province of *Divinity*. But the system of Emmons is signalized by its elevation of the truths relating to the Divine Person, above the truths relating to ethical abstractions. He did not undervalue these abstractions. He regarded *moral* science as the *basis* of theological science. He viewed ethical rules as supreme in regard to all merely scientific rules. But he revered the great Impersonation of moral good, as superior to all abstract qualities, and he adored Jehovah as the *Most* High, because all ethical laws are realized and fulfilled in the infinite mind. He proved the *fairness* and *equitableness* of the divine Spirit, in order that he may give unusual prominence to the doctrines of the divine government and agency. The honorable preacher taught, *first* of all, that Jehovah wills, immutably, to do *right;* and, *then*, the preacher insisted on our consenting that Jehovah do precisely what He pleases. Having laid the basis of the Divine Sovereignty in the eternal principles of rectitude, the even-handed minister could not think too much, or say too much of this adorable Sovereignty. — It has become popular to complain of modern theology as too *subjective*. But the theology of Emmons is *objective* in an eminent degree. It may be remarked of him, as decidedly as of almost any other man, God was in all his thoughts. The grand object of reverence is conspicuous through all the writings of this reverend thinker. He seems to have been *in haste* to unfold some of the Royal attributes. He does not linger long enough to explain his words, but speeds onward to portray the divine excellence. Some of the most forcible objections against his creed are occasioned by his impetuous eagerness to unfold the glories of his Monarch. Two particulars may here be named, as illustrating, and illustrated by, his tendency to honor the Great King.

(1) Emmons did believe in the Reality of Second Causes; in the Laws, as real Forces, of Nature.

This has been denied. But we have italicized certain words in the following sentences, which are inexplicable unless he supposed, and we might adduce scores of passages, proving him to have supposed, that



Digitized by Google

*effects* in nature are *produced* by the dependent *energy* of Second Causes.

"The idea of *cause* and *effect* always carries *something more* in it, than the bare perception of *antecedent* and *consequent*." — "When we walk, we are conscious of a *power to produce* motion. The *exercise* of this *power* gives us the perception of *cause*, and the motion which flows from it gives us the perception, not only of a *consequent*, but of an *effect*." (Works, II. 5.) — "We are capable of discerning the laws of nature, and the various *powers* of all the creatures and objects around us. When we see fire consuming wood, and water suffocating living creatures, we immediately perceive that fire is the *cause* of consuming wood, and water the *cause* of drowning animals." "The perception of *cause* and *effect* is *peculiar* to men [as distinct from brutes], and is owing to a *peculiar power, faculty, or capacity* of their minds." (Works, VII. 280, 281.) — "But volitions are the next, immediate, and *efficient* cause of external action." (Orig. Ed. V. 134.) — "The *laws of nature* absolutely *limit* the lives of men. The seeds of mortality are implanted in their constitution. Their bodies *must*, according to a *fixed law*, return to the dust from which they were taken. All, therefore, who die by sickness, or accident, or violence, or any *other cause*, than the *course of nature*, are really deprived of the residue of their days." (Orig. Ed. III. 82.) — "Life is sustained and preserved by *secondary causes;* and all the *secondary causes* of the preservation of life are under the entire control of God, who can make them the *means of destroying, as well as of preserving life*." (Orig. Ed. III. 408.) — "God employs so many *secondary causes* in bestowing blessings upon mankind, that they are extremely apt to overlook the *primary* and *supreme* Cause from whence they flow." (Orig. Ed. II. 313.) — "God by his particular providence, causes one *general law of nature* to *counteract* and *obstruct* another in producing its natural effect." (Orig. Ed. III. 330.) — "The *means* to promote any end are as *necessary* as the end to be promoted." — By *employing* men as *means* in carrying on his designs, God has made human *agency exceedingly necessary* and important. (Works, IV. 308. See also, Orig. Ed. II. 204, 330; III. 10, 57; IV. 25; V. 102, 120, 535, 547, 623; VI. 45, 74, 212, etc.)

(2) He chose to say but little of the Natural Forces, lest he should withdraw Attention from the Supreme Dominion of Jehovah.

He did, indeed, give a preëminence to those energies forming the natural power of men to fulfil their moral obligations; for unless he did so, he could not exhibit the honesty and honorableness of the Lawgiver. But in other respects, he was wonderful for his habit of "looking through nature up to nature's God." On principle, he said less of the powers with which the Creator has enriched the earth, than of the riches of power remaining in the Creator himself. He was jealous of many remarks on the forces of the material world, lest men should forget their dependence on Him who created, sustains, and governs all the forces of matter and mind. His remarks on *nature* are, comparatively, so few, that many have supposed him to deny the *separate* existence of nature. His allusions to Second Causes are so much more infrequent than his allusions to the great First Cause, that even Professor Stuart misunderstood him to

Digitized by Google

teach, that there is in fact only one *real* cause in existence. The objector asks: Does not Emmons affirm that man is not the efficient cause of his own choices? He does, sometimes; but *then* he means by efficient cause, that agent who produces a volition by previously choosing to produce it; and a man does not produce his choice, his first choice for example, by previously choosing to produce it. Man does not begin his moral action by choosing to choose. He does not put forth his first preference, as an effect of his antecedently preferring to put it forth. On this point, Emmons is the truest representative who has appeared, of the Edwardean philosophy. But rejoins the critic: Does *not* Emmons affirm or imply that God is the only efficient cause in the universe? He does. But here he uses the word *efficient* as denoting *independent*. He teaches that all other choices are put forth by the intervention of powers which absolutely depend on the first eternal choice of the First Cause. That first eternal choice is the only independent, and, with this meaning, the only efficient cause in the universe. But continues the objector: Is this use of the word, plain and exact? It is more intense than plain. It is more emphatic than exact. Here as elsewhere, Emmons affords an illustration of the criticisms found on pp. 299–308 of this Memoir. Accordingly, we maintain that although his language is more nervous than perspicuous, more compressed than precise, on this theme, yet it may be understood by considering the general scope of his theology, and by remembering his favorite principle, that *agency in God is like agency in man*, that *causation in God is like causation in man*. If man, therefore, be not a real cause, God himself is not a real cause. — (See pp. 376, 382, above.)

C. — He aimed to make his Theology illustrate the Sovereignty of Divine Grace.

If there be one truth predominant above all others in the creed of Emmons, it is the Sovereignty of God in the dispensation of Grace. It is not the *mere* sovereignty of God, it is not sovereign *action*, but it is that form of sovereign *goodness* which consists in bestowing favor on the ill-deserving. This predominance of sovereign grace might be illustrated by various parts of his creed. It will be here illustrated by his theory of the Atonement.

(1) He regarded the Atonement of Christ as the Central Truth of Theology.

In his herculean effort to raise the churches from an Arminian to a Genevan faith, he employed such nervous phrases as have led ungrateful readers to accuse him of overlooking the grand centre of all Christianity, in his zeal for maintaining the distinctive tenets of Calvinism. A few

Digitized by Google

of his words may refute this accusation, and may prove that what he so often calls "the astonishing love of the Divine Redeemer," stimulated him to his most earnest thought.

We are sorry to say that Emmons, like Hegel, disbelieved that the stars are inhabited. But we are glad to notice his sublime conjecture, that these brilliant globes are gems in the crown of Immanuel, whom Emmons calls "the grand centre of union and blessedness among both men and angels." These stars, he writes, "may have been made to display divine power, and give magnificence to the Great Redeemer, and his glorious work of redemption."—(Orig. Ed. VI. 29.) Philosophers "overlook the vast importance of the whole human race, who are rational and immortal beings, and capable of endless happiness or misery; and the great and astonishing work of redemption, which has been devised and carried on by the incarnation, life, death, and government of the divine Redeemer. It is not half so strange that God should garnish the heavens with the sun, moon, and stars, those vast material orbs, for the service of men, as that he should give his only begotten Son, the Lord of glory, to suffer and die on the cross, to save the sinful race of men from deserved and everlasting ruin. God designed that the *whole work of creation should be subordinate and subservient to the great work of redemption;* and that the inhabitants of the upper world should all be employed in the service of his Son and for the benefit of this lower world. If philosophers had just and exalted ideas of the work of redemption, they would not be so apt to magnify the sun, moon, and stars above this little world, and its apparently little inhabitants." . . . . . "As he meant to make a peculiar discovery of himself to principalities and powers above, by this gracious and glorious interposition in favor of the sinful children of men; so the angels have been, for ages, delightfully looking into and admiring the great plan of redemption, and *have seen more of God in it, than they ever did see, or will see, in any other parts of his works.*" . . . . . "His providing such a glorious and divine Saviour for all mankind, was the *strongest expression of his benevolence toward them that he could exhibit.* It was not only morally but naturally *impossible* for him to give a higher testimony of his sincere and ardent desire to save the whole fallen and guilty race of Adam." . . . . . The death of Christ "was the most wonderful and glorious and important event *that ever did or ever will take place in this or in any other part of the universe.*"—(I. 46, 86, 87; V. 75; VI. 30, 64, 102; VII. 264.) . . . . . God "has *no other* source of happiness than the consummation of his eternal purpose which *he purposed in Christ Jesus.*" . . . . "To deny the doctrine of atonement through the vicarious death and sufferings of Christ, is to oppose the *whole current of Scripture;* and is *subversive of the whole gospel,* which has always been preached from Adam to this day."—(Works, II. 830; III. 57. See also Orig. Ed. I. 46, 86, 87; V. 75; VI. 30, 64, 102; VII. 264. He speaks of other doctrines as *fundamental,* but this as "fundamental *and* comprehensive." He speaks of *other* doctrines as fundamental, because they enclose *this* as *their* centre, but he does not speak of *this* as fundamental, because it encloses *others* as *its* centre.)

(2) He regarded the Atonement as concentrating in its Nature, Origin, and Application, the Free and Sovereign Grace of God.

Did Christ bear the legal penalty which was due to us? "Yes," many Calvinists reply. "No," was the reply of Emmons; for, *after* our penalty has been borne once, distributive justice forbids that it be

Digitized by Google

borne the second time, and therefore, on this theory, our freedom from punishment results *immediately* from strict justice, not from Sovereign Grace. — Are our sins literally imputed to Christ? "Yes," many Calvinists answer. "No," was the answer of Emmons; for, *while* our sins are imputed to Christ, distributive justice forbids that they be imputed to us also, and therefore, on this theory, we are freed from their burden *immediately* by exact justice, and not by Sovereign Grace. — Has Christ rescued us from the *guilt* of sin? "Yes," respond many Calvinists. "No," responds Emmons; for, *after* we have been rescued from guilt, we do not deserve to be punished, and it is a solecism to affirm, that we are saved by Free Grace from a penalty which we do not deserve to endure. Whatever is not exacted by justice, cannot, so far forth, be remitted by grace. — Is the meritorious obedience of Christ literally imputed to us? "Yes," many Calvinists affirm. "No," is the word of Emmons; for *after* a perfect and meritorious obedience is literally imputed to us, we must receive its positive recompense from retributive justice, not from Sovereign Grace. — Are we rewarded *immediately* on the ground of the virtues cherished by Christ? "Yes," many Calvinists believe. "No," is the belief of Emmons; for, if we are rewarded immediately on the ground of Christ's virtues, it must be on the ground of their merit of condignity, and if they have this literal and proper merit, they exact our grand recompense from retributive justice, and if so, we are not recompensed by Sovereign Grace. Thus we perceive that from the beginning to the end of his theory, this sterling Calvinist is inflamed with a zeal to honor the dearest attribute of the loveliest being, and to ascribe all our blessings directly and immediately to a more winning perfection than justice, to the free, untrammelled, unnecessitated Grace of the Monarch. The dominant aim of his speculations on the atonement, is to exhibit *all* the favors which we receive as resulting from Christ's atoning death; and to exhibit the remission of sins as the *only* one of these favors which the Sovereign God would have *no right* to bestow upon us without that atoning death; to represent the atonement as the *cause* or *occasion* without which we could not *properly* and *wisely* be regenerated, and as the *ground* on which we could not *with justice* be forgiven. Justice interfered with sovereignty not in regard to the positive blessings bestowed upon us, but only with regard to the negative blessing, the release from punishment.

Dr. Samuel Spring criticized one of the discourses of Emmons on Justification, as departing unnecessarily from the received nomenclature. It deserves this criticism; for in reality the favorite idea of Emmons required him to affirm, rather than to deny, that the atonement of Christ is the *ground* of all those blessings which we receive from it *indirectly* and



Digitized by Google

*remotely.* In his ardent aspiration to honor the divine sovereignty, he chooses to substitute *cause* or *occasion* for *ground;* and he thus *verbally* contradicts what he *really* teaches. We cannot sanction all the nervous phrases in which he expressed his theory, nor all the ideas which he included in it. But the annexed parallel columns will show, that his condensed utterances have, here as elsewhere, drawn a veil over his otherwise luminous composition. They have exposed him to the *imputation* of believing what he never did believe. They were prompted by his enthusiastic desire to prove, that in the redemptive work God "displays not only sovereign grace, but *sovereign grace in the most sovereign manner, and at the highest possible expense;*" for Emmons declares that, in one view, God, "*not Christ,* made the atonement," and in another view, Christ made it, thus "giving to his Father an *opportunity of acting out all the feelings of his heart towards his sinful and ill-deserving creatures.*"

*The Bold Announcements.*

"Even now God bestows innumerable blessings upon his degenerate offspring, *without respect to Christ.*" . . . . "There is no temporal favor so great, but he can bestow it upon the vilest of men *as a mere act of sovereignty, without the least respect to Christ as mediator.*" Scores of passages, like those in the opposite column, interpret these words as implying, that God has a *sovereign* right to bestow a certain kind of blessings on sinners whom he punishes forever; that justice merely requires their eternal punishment, and merely forbids their being pardoned, and therefore, *so long as he inflicts upon them their deserved pains,* he has a *Sovereign* right to bestow upon them such favors as do not involve their release from what justice demands, nor their reception of what justice forbids; that, accordingly, in his treatment of impenitent men who have not begun to endure their everlasting punishment, he has a *Sovereign* right to bestow upon them such favors as do not involve their pardon, or their final release from any merited evil; he may bestow such blessings without respect to the atonement, viewed as *immediately and directly obliging* him, *in point of justice,* to bestow them, also without respect to the atonement, viewed as *giving* him a sovereign right, *which he would not otherwise have,* to bestow them. The opposite column shows, however, that God can never grant a solitary favor to sinners, without respect to the atonement, viewed as making it *wise* and *proper* to grant the favor.

*The Explanatory Words.*

The atonement "is only the *occasion, or cause, without which none would be sanctified, or prepared for heaven.*" . . . . "In a word, the atonement of Christ is the *occasion* of the sinner's regeneration, and the *sole ground* of his pardon or justification." . . . . . "It is easy to see how *all the blessings which God has ever bestowed, or ever will bestow upon all intelligent creatures, have flowed and will flow, directly or indirectly, through the medium of Christ.*" . . . . . "There is an important sense, therefore, in which it is true, that *all the temporal, spiritual and eternal good that mankind have enjoyed and will enjoy, comes to them through the medium of Christ.*" — The doctrine of justification by faith in the atonement, "is the only solid *ground* upon which men can safely build their hopes of escaping the wrath to come, and obtaining eternal life." . . . . . "God may pardon little children, whom he renews and causes to exercise holy affections, though they are ignorant of him and of Christ, *for whose sake* he forgives *and admits them to heaven;*" i. e. he admits them to heaven, *ultimately* on occasion of Christ's death, but *immediately* on occasion of their holy affections.

"As Christ stood alone, and no one with him in making atonement, they [believers] did not deserve to be rewarded for what he voluntarily did and suffered; though it is true, that *he deserved* to *be rewarded* for making atonement." . . . . Emmons often speaks of

Digitized by Google

Christ "did not *merit* any thing at the hand of God for himself, or for mankind." "There is no propriety in using the term, *merits of Christ*."

Emmons here means, that Christ has no merit which renders it obligatory on God, *in point of strict retributive justice*, to bestow any kind of favor on sinners. Thus he says: "Christ did not lay God under the least obligation *in point of justice*, to pardon and save a single sinner," "to pardon even true penitents." God "exercises the same *free grace* in pardoning sinners through the atonement, *as if no atonement had been made*." "God exercises as *real grace* in pardoning sinners through the atonement of Christ, *as in sending him to make an atonement*." "We *deserve* to suffer as *much*, as if Christ had *not* suffered *at all*." "For if Christ *merited* salvation for all for whom he died, then God is *obliged, in point of justice*, to save all for whom he died; and if he died for all, then he is equally *bound, in point of justice*, to save the whole human race."

God "cannot consistently reward them [penitent believers] for their sincere obedience, *on any other than their own account*;" i. e. God cannot *approve of* them, on account of any thing, as a *direct* and *immediate* cause, but their sincere obedience; he can not reward them, i. e. *express his approval* of them, on account of any thing, as the *proximate* condition, but their own holy love; they do not deserve approval, or any expression of approval, *directly and immediately* on account of what Christ has done, but only on account of what they have done, under influences which flowed from the atonement as the *remote* and *ultimate* cause. — Emmons uses the words, on *account* of, on the *ground* of, to express the *proximate justifying* cause.

"God grants regenerating grace to whom he pleases, as an act of mere sovereignty, *without any particular respect to the death or atonement of Christ*," i. e. without any particular respect to this death as *obligating God in distributive justice* to regenerate men. . . . . "It was not the primary or principal design of all true obedience as "*worthy* of his [God's] approbation," "praiseworthy," etc. He says: "All the sincere obedience and good works of believers *deserve* the divine *approbation* and *gracious reward, solely on account of their intrinsic and moral excellence*." Of course, then, he believes that Christ's obedience is worthy of praise, and deserves a gratuitous reward. He often says: "God promised to *reward* him [Christ] and has *rewarded*, and continues to *reward* him, by giving him those for whom he voluntarily suffered, and whom he died to save." — Emmons does not mean that *any* good act of a creature deserves reward *in point of justice*, but he means that it is *morally fit* to approve, and to express approbation, of *every* good act; and this expressed approbation is a reward *not of justice* but of *gratuitous*, or else of gracious *benevolence*. He does not regard it proper to characterize this *desert* by the word *merit*, either the merit of *congruity* or of *condignity*. Still he does, now and then, comply with what he deems an *improper* usage, and he speaks of the "*meritorious* death" of the Son of God.

"The holy and virtuous actions of believers are as amiable and worthy of the divine approbation, as if they had never sinned; yet they cannot be rewarded, unless they are forgiven. But *after* God justifies or forgives them, *on Christ's account*, they stand as fair to be rewarded for all their good deeds, as if they had never sinned and forfeited the divine favor. Thus there appears to be a perfect consistency between God's justifying, that is, forgiving believers, *for Christ's sake*, and yet rewarding them *for their own sake*, according to their works." . . . . . "The pardon and forgiveness of believers is properly called justification, because it places them in a condition in which God *may treat them as though they were and always had been perfectly innocent*." — "*This plan of redemption has rendered it consistent* for God to grant forgiveness to all true believers through the blood of Christ, *and to grant any other favor to them, and to the rest of mankind*, as an act of mere sovereign goodness."

"The *ultimate* design of Christ in all he did and suffered for the church, was to raise it to a state of *holiness*. But would he have done and suffered so much for this end, if he had not viewed holiness as intrinsically excellent? His *ultimate* purpose in dying for his people was, to save them from their *sins and adorn them*

Digitized by Google

Christ, in coming and dying for his people, to redeem or save them from the *power* and *dominion* of sin; but to save or redeem them from the *punishment* of it." — Emmons often teaches that salvation from punishment is the blessing which *could* not have been granted without an atonement by a just God; in this sense, it was the *primary* or *principal*, in the sense of *first* and *fundamental*, object of the atonement. The opposite column shows that Emmons makes a distinction between *primary* and *ultimate*.

*with the white robes of holiness.* This will give them a crown of glory, which will never fade, and raise them to the highest perfection to which they can be raised. The whole of Christ's mediatorial conduct speaks louder than words, and proclaims *holiness* to be the supreme glory and perfection of all created and uncreated beings." (The extracts in these parallel columns are found chiefly in Works, II. and III. Parts XIII. and XIV. See also, Orig. Ed. I. 46, 86, 87; VI. 29, 64; VII. 303, etc. etc.)

D. — He aimed to make his Theological System illustrate the Duty of Union with God.

The genius of a man is developed in the simplicity of his great works. In no one particular is the intellect of Emmons more clearly distinguished, than in the fact, that his entire "system of divinity" may be reduced now to one, then to another, again to a third, grand principle. A single truth permeates and forms his creed. If *that* truth be not recognized, then another truth presents itself, as moulding his whole faith. If the *second* truth be unnoticed, then a third principle is found giving shape to his theology. His doctrinal belief was fashioned by the rule, that *men ought to be one with God.* Union with the Father and the Son was the *principium* to which all his teachings, in a bright aspect of them, may be traced. He aimed to convince men, that their constitution is of the same genus with the divine; that the divine glory is involved in their welfare, and their welfare is involved in the divine glory; that the divine will should be their will, the divine purposes their delight, the divine triumphs their joy; that even in the most rigid and afflictive procedures of their Sovereign, men should acquiesce; and should merge their individual preferences into his comprehensive choice, all creatures being encompassed and swallowed up in their Creator. Had he been as poetical as he was metaphysical, he might have displayed his system in the most gorgeous colors, and made it as dazzling as it is acute. He prefers the simple, suggestive words:

"The pure spirits in heaven" "feel as God feels towards himself and all his holy and unholy creatures." . . . . The truly contented man "is *godly*, and feels as God does towards all the human race." . . . . The believer "*loves what Christ loves*, and *hates what Christ hates*. He has the *same views* of the divine Majesty, of the divine law, of sin, and of himself, that Christ has. And he has a *joint interest* with Christ in the love of God, in the protection of providence, and in all the blessings which result from the work of redemption. This union is of the *same nature* with that which subsists between *Christ and his Father*." . . . . "This union makes the *principal* figure in the sacred writings, and is oftener alluded to than any other. It is on account of this union, that saints or believers, in distinction from the world, are said to die with Christ; to be crucified with Christ; to be buried with Christ; to be quick-

Digitized by Google

ened with Christ; to rise with Christ; to live with Christ; to be circumcised with Christ; to be baptized with Christ; to be complete in Christ; to be members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. And it is on account of this union, that Christ and the church are so often prefigured and represented by the various metaphors of Adam and Eve; of Adam and his posterity; of the husband and wife; of Aaron and his robes; of the vine and its branches; of the head and its members; and of the corner stone and superstructure."

"The kind Parent of the universe *places his happiness in the happiness* of his immensely numerous offspring; and it would *diminish his blessedness, if he saw a single individual among his creatures,* that was less happy than he could consistently make him." . . . . "It would *wound his benevolent heart,* if one human person were not as happy as he could consistently make him." . . . . "He knows infinitely better than creatures do, what is most for his glory and for their good; and he means to promote *his own glory that he may promote their greatest good. He will be happy in seeing them happy; and they will be happy in seeing him happy.*"—(Works, Orig. Ed. III. 492; V. 308; VI. 178, 489, etc.)

E.—He aimed to make his Theology illustrate the Duty of Men to love themselves.

As early as 1786, when our Calvinists were not accustomed to such words, he printed his Sermon on the Dignity of Man. He portrayed the constitutional ability of our souls, as a token of their high estate. Notwithstanding all his antagonism to the Arminian creed, he often insists on the wonderful exaltation of minds made in the likeness of, and for a union with, their divine original. He adopted as a first principle of his ethics, that virtue consists in impartial love, in such a love to every individual as is proportioned to the intrinsic and comparative worth of that individual, and therefore in such a love to self as quadrates with the value of self, and in such a love to God as harmonizes with the infinite worthiness of God. He also maintained as a *fundamental axiom,* that men should choose what their Maker chooses, and accordingly should love themselves because they are loved by their Maker. Like other Hopkinsians, he did not sanction the phrase *self-love* as expressing an innocent or a holy feeling; but he preferred the phrase *love to self* as denoting the *right* kind or degree of attachment to self, and he used the phrase *self-love* as equivalent to *selfishness,* and as denoting the *wrong* kind or degree of this attachment. But his words, justifying and positively requiring a warm love to self, are so numerous that *all* of them *can* not, and so explicit that *many* of them *need* not, be quoted here. A few will suffice:

Paul "considered every person whom he was instrumental of converting, as a part of his future and eternal reward, and *therefore* most sincerely desired in his preaching, to save the souls of men." . . . . "If Moses had respect, in the exercise of disinterested benevolence, to a future and eternal reward, then saints *may* and *do* regard their own eternal good more than sinners [regard theirs]." . . . . "Good men, therefore, view themselves *vastly more valuable* than sinners view themselves." . . . .

Digitized by Google

"Success in any business is the most animating motive to activity. *It was the prospect which Moses had of the recompense of reward*, that animated him to labor so long and so faithfully for God." . . . . "Moses had a right to regard his own future and eternal happiness *according to its worth*, and *to seek to promote it* in the way God required him to do it." . . . . "We see that in all his obedience and suffering, *he had respect to the joy set before him*, which was his reward. Accordingly he prayed for the bestowment of his reward." . . . . "No *selfish* man ever desired the enjoyment of God for its own sake, *as a source of real happiness*." . . . . "If Moses was really disinterested in having respect to the recompense of reward, then real saints *may be as disinterested in seeking their own good*, as in seeking the good of others." . . . . "The doctrine of disinterested love does not require any person *to disregard his own interest or happiness*." . . . . "Neither Moses nor any other good man, *ever disregarded his own good* in the exercise of disinterested benevolence to others, but only regarded *their greater* good more than *his own inferior* good." . . . . "The benevolent man will give up a less good of his own for a greater good of others. And the reason is, *he places his happiness in the happiness of others*."

As the truly benevolent man "values the happiness of the whole universe more than the happiness of a particular part, so he values the happiness of *each* part in *exact* proportion to *its intrinsic and comparative worth*." . . . "Universal benevolence leads the subject of it to regard *all* beings according to their apparent worth and importance, and to seek their good according to the rank they hold in the scale of existence. This disposition will incline any being *to treat himself*, and every other being, perfectly right." . . . . "If sinners love themselves *because they are themselves*, which is selfish and sinful, then, after they experience a saving change, from selfishness to benevolence, they love themselves in a manner totally different from what they did before. They *love themselves in the same manner that God loves them*. He loves them impartially according to their character and capacities. He values their interest no more nor *less* than it is worth. And *they* value their own interest no more nor *less* than it is worth." . . . .

"Good men have no right to be selfish in the least degree, but they *have a right to value their own temporal and eternal interest according to its worth, and no more*." — (Works, II. 699, 700; Orig. Ed. I. 204; V. 241; VI. 132, 133, 241, 403, 504, etc.)

**F. — He aimed to make his Creed illustrate the Harmony of Disinterested Submission, with Love to Self, Love to Men, Love to God.**

His favorite axioms were: "Unless we love ourselves, we cannot love our fellow men, as we are required to love them." "Unless we love our fellow men, we cannot love God, in whose image they are." "Unless we love our own interest, there can be no beauty or virtue in giving it up for the greater interest of our neighbors, or of our Maker." As the missionary zeal of Emmons and his friends clustered around the doctrine of Disinterested Love, and as this was one of the most efficient among the formative principles of his theology, it demands our prolonged attention.

It was in 1782 that Mr. Cowper published his Translation of certain Poems, written by Madame Guion. In one of them, the poet sings:

Digitized by Google

"Be not angry; I resign
Henceforth all my will to thine;
I consent that thou depart,
Though thine absence breaks my heart;
Go then, and forever too;
All is right that thou wilt do."

In another of her Poems, the submissive quietist exclaims:

"Thou hast no lightnings, O thou just!
Or I their force should know;
And, if thou strike me in the dust,
My soul approves the blow.

"The heart, that values less its ease,
Than it adores thy ways;
In thine avenging anger sees
A subject of its praise.

"Pleas'd I could lie, conceal'd and lost,
In shades of central night;
Not to avoid thy wrath, thou know'st,
But lest I grieve thy sight.

"Smite me, O thou, whom I provoke!
And I will love thee still:
The well-deserv'd, and righteous stroke,
Shall please me, though it kill."

It was natural for a man, enamored like Dr. Emmons of all that is thorough, profound and heart-searching, to say of the doctrine suggested in the preceding stanzas: It is "extremely noble, virtuous and honorable." It is "pure, noble and benevolent." He could not say with the self-abnegating songster:

"To me 'tis equal, whether Love ordain
My life or death, appoint me pain or ease;
My soul perceives no real Ill in pain;
In ease, or health, no real Good she sees."

He did not believe, that a person should be "*as* pleased when shipwrecked, as when safe on shore." But he *did* believe, that if the glory of God require any imaginable evil of us, we should submit to his will, and aim to secure his glory, while we dread the evil. He could not have stated his theory better than in the words of the quietist named above:

"Thy will in all things I approve,
Exalted or cast down!
Thy will in ev'ry state I love,
And even in thy frown."

We have already alluded to Emmons's fondness for expressing his opinions in a style which can never subject him to the charge of aiming at popularity, of prophesying *smooth* things, of polishing away the corners of any triangle or hexagon. The charge is a *plausible* one, that he often used the expression, "Sinners ought to be willing to be *damned*." But though plausible, it is not *true*. I do not know that he ever uttered these words even in conversation. They are nowhere to be found in his published volumes. Still, he does employ the phrase: "Sinners ought to be willing

Digitized by Google

to be *lost*, if the glory of God requires it." He had read in the Commentary of John Calvin, that when Paul said, "I could wish myself accursed from Christ," the apostle did not speak of *temporal* death but *eternal*, (*non de temporaneo duntaxat exitio — sed æterna morte.*) "Therefore," says Calvin, on Rom. 9: 3, "it was a proof of most ardent love, that Paul did not scruple, for the purpose of delivering the Jews, to imprecate *that* damnation upon *himself* which he saw to be impending over *them*." (*Non dubitaret Paulus sibi damnationem imprecari quam videbat Judeis impendere, quo eos liberaret.*) Standing on the basis of this passage, as thus interpreted, the Franklin Calvinist contended, that whenever sinners regarded themselves as instantly exposed to the divine justice, as liable to be sentenced immediately to everlasting punishment, the sinners should submit to that justice, should acquiesce in that sentence, should be willing that God's decree be executed, whatever that decree may have provided for themselves. The object that secures their willingness, is not *their own* state, but the *divine* glory. In the strictest meaning of the terms, Emmons believed, not so much that sinners should be willing to *be lost*, as that they should be willing to have *God's decree* fulfilled, even although this decree require them to be lost; they should submit not so distinctively to their endless ruin, as to the *justice of Jehovah*, even if that justice demand their endless ruin. It is not so properly distress to which they should feel resigned, as it is the *will of* God, which requires that distress. He repeats and reiterates the remark:

> The willingness to endure eternal pain "does not imply love to pain or misery, *but* ONLY *a love to that* BENEVOLENT JUSTICE which inflicts it." — (Works, III. 224.)

The theory of Emmons, then, flowed from his love of *honoring Jehovah*, even in the severest of the divine inflictions. It flowed from his desire to make all men *agree with Jehovah*, to make *their* will coincide with God's will in reference to their future state. He often said: God is not willing that any should perish, and men should not be willing that any should perish, perdition being viewed as mere sin or pain, or both; but he said as often: God does will to execute his own decree, and men should be willing that God execute his own decree, that decree being a good, and being viewed as a good, even when it results in the sin and pain of men. He insisted, that if God be willing in any sense to punish a transgressor, the transgressor should be willing *in that same sense*, and *in no other*, to be punished; the creature should not differ from the Creator.

The theory of Emmons flowed, also, from his desire that all men exercise *impartial* benevolence. He read everywhere in the writings of Calvinists, that good men do not rebel against God for justly and righteously punishing *others*; he supposed, therefore, that good men ought not to rebel against God, if he should justly punish *themselves*. As they ought not to *contend against* the will of God, so they ought to *coincide with* that will, if it had provided for themselves the same ruin which it provided for other beings who were no worse than themselves. The will of God is always right, and should never be opposed. "For," says Dr. Emmons, "how could they [the saints] be happy in seeing God treat *other* sinners according to their deserts, if they were never willing that he should treat *them* in the same manner? Or how could they say 'Amen, Alleluia,' while they saw the smoke of the torment of the damned ascending for ever and ever, if *they* were never willing to lie down in everlasting sorrow?" — (Works, III. 225.)

Professor Moses Stuart preached a sermon in the Seminary Chapel at Andover, against the doctrine of Disinterested Submission, as it was advocated by Hopkins,

Digitized by Google

Emmons, and Spring. Notes of this sermon were sent to Dr. Emmons, and he was requested to make his comments on them. The following are his criticisms in a letter to the relative who solicited his opinion.

"I have read Mr. S.'s arguments against unconditional submission, which appear to me more plausible than conclusive. Submission is as well understood, I believe, as resignation; and either term properly signifies a willingness to suffer any evil which God pleases to inflict. This willingness, however, does not imply any love to evil, but only love to God who inflicts it. Love to God is always implied in submission, which can flow from no other source. None but a regenerate person, or if you please, none but a Christian, ever exercises submission to God under any evil which God inflicts, whether small or great. Indeed the same spirit of benevolence which will dispose a person to submit to God under the least evil, will dispose him to submit to God under the greatest; because God appears as amiable in inflicting the greatest, as in inflicting the least evil. The difficulty, if there be any in this question, lies not in determining the nature or degree of submission, but in determining when any regenerate person or real Christian ought to be willing that God should destroy him in a future state. To set this point in as clear a light as I can, I would observe,

"1. That a person may be regenerated, and yet not know that he is so. Though regeneration consists in new affections, and he may know in the time of it, that he does exercise new affections, yet he may not know that his new affections are holy affections; and consequently not know that he is the subject of a saving change, and a real child of God. He may be in this dark and doubtful state, for days, or weeks, or even for months, after his heart is renewed. This many a Christian has declared, when he made a public profession of religion.

"2. A renewed person, or real Christian, who does not know that he is renewed, cannot know that he is entitled to eternal life, according to the promises of the gospel. Though it be true that he *is* entitled to eternal life, yet he sees no evidence of it, so long as he sees no evidence of being a subject of saving grace. Therefore,

"3. A regenerate person, or real Christian, in such a situation, must view himself as exposed to future misery. As he does not view himself as a believer, he must view himself to be an unbeliever, and actually deserving and exposed to the punishment of an unbeliever; or, in other words, he must suppose that God is as much disposed to punish *him* forever as any other sinner.

"4. While a regenerate person or real Christian thus views himself under a sentence of condemnation, he certainly ought to be willing that God should execute that sentence of condemnation upon him. He certainly must be willing that God should do this, or else he is unwilling. But to be unwilling, is practically saying that God shall not reign over him, or dispose of him as shall be most for his own glory. Now I ask Mr. S., or any other person, how a real subject of grace ought to feel in such a situation as this? You will say, he ought to desire salvation. I say so too. But ought he to desire salvation absolutely, or unconditionally, whether he be a subject of grace or not? He does not know that he is a subject of grace, or that he ever will be. And therefore, he does not know but that God is morally obliged, according to the threatening of his law, and according to his eternal decree, to cast him off for ever. And should he, in this situation, stand and contend with his Maker, or cordially submit? I am now ready to meet the arguments or objections which you mention.

"*Objection* 1.—None but real Christians do exercise the virtue of true submission to God's will under afflictions, or in the prospect of them.

"*Answer.*—This is said, and meant, as an objection against those who advocate unconditional submission, and is really the substance of all Mr. S. has said to refute



Digitized by Google

the doctrine he opposes; for all the absurdities he endeavors to point out, as arising from the doctrine, are supposed to arise from the character and condition of a real Christian. But this is fighting against a man of straw, of his own make. The advocates of unconditional submission, who understand themselves, freely grant, that it is only the subject of grace, or the real Christian, that does exercise true submission. I know indeed that Mr. Hooker and Mr. Shepard maintained, that a sinner under awakening and conviction, must be willing to be cast off for ever, in order to prepare him for regeneration or true conversion. This we acknowledge is an erroneous opinion; and no Hopkinsian that I am acquainted with, adopts this opinion.

"*Objection* 2. — If we suppose a person submissively resigned to future misery, we must suppose him, of course, to be a Christian.

"*Answer.* — Freely and fully granted, as being nothing to the purpose.

"*Objection* 3. — We have, then, this incongruity presented. Here is a Christian, resigned to future evil, which can by no possibility take place under the government of God. For God cannot, without a sacrifice of his veracity, permit a real Christian to perish.

"*Answer.* — Very true; but what then? Though God cannot permit a real Christian to perish, and though a real Christian, who knows he is a real Christian, ought not to be willing that God should violate his promise, and cast him off for ever; yet, it by no means follows, that a real Christian who does not know that he is a real Christian, ought not to be willing that God should cast him off for ever, if his own glory requires him to do it. And if he be not a Christian, as he supposes he is not, he cannot know but the glory of God will require him to cast him off for ever. His duty is precisely the same in his supposed situation, as it would be if he were not a real Christian.

"*Objection* 4. — It follows, then, as the evil in question is not, under the government of God, a possible one, that a supposed resignation to it is not, and cannot be true submission; for true submission is resignation to present evils, or to those which are certain in prospect. This, therefore, is imaginary submission. It costs but little, and is worth still less.

"*Answer.* — A real Christian may exercise as real submission to a supposed evil, as to a real one. And if he does not exercise as real submission to a supposed evil, as to a real one, he is as guilty, as if the supposed evil had been a real evil. When Joseph's brethren came to their father and made him believe that Joseph had been torn to pieces by a wild beast, ought not Jacob to have been submissive to God under his supposed bereavement? And was he not criminal in feeling, and saying as he did? — 'It is my son's coat: an evil beast hath devoured him: Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces. And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted.' — Though his son was not dead, yet he verily believed that he was dead, and that God had bereaved him of his darling. In this belief he was altogether inexcusable in refusing to submit to God, and to be comforted. And surely, if he had submitted to this supposed, or if you please, imaginary evil, it would have cost him much, and been worth all the gold of Ophir. The application is easy. A real Christian, who believes he is not a real Christian, ought to be willing to suffer that future punishment, which God might inflict upon him, if he were, and always should be, an impenitent sinner.

"*Objection* 5. — Imaginary submission can never be a real test of Christian character. Actual submission only is evidence of it. Indeed, no state of mind which depends upon the future, can ever be at present, evidence of a Christian temper. We

Digitized by Google

appeal, and must appeal, to past experience, or present actual experience only for a test of our religion. Submission, then, to a supposed misery that is future, is no evidence to us of religion, unless that misery is so certain that it becomes present. But in the case supposed, the misery is not only future, but actually impossible.

"*Answer.* — Is it not a present evil to expect and fear a future and eternal evil? Has it not been shown that a real Christian, who does not know nor think that he is a real Christian, has just ground to expect and fear a future and eternal evil? His fear is not imaginary, but real; and his submission ought not to be imaginary, but real. His case exactly resembles Jacob's. He supposed his son was dead; and his supposition, though not founded in reality, was yet founded upon credible evidence, and such as carried full conviction to his mind, and laid him under moral obligation to be really and immediately submissive to the supposed will of God; yea, to the real will of God; for it was his revealed will that he should be submissive to him in the mournful situation in which he had really placed him. So it is the real will of God that a real Christian, who does not know nor believe that he is a real Christian, should be at that time, whether before or after he has had a hope, willing that he should cast him off for ever, if his glory requires it, as he does not know but it may. I now ask whether unreserved submission to the divine disposal, is not directly calculated to remove the doubts of a doubting Christian; and whether any thing else can remove his doubts? Submission in this case is the test, and the only infallible test to himself of his Christian character. If a doubting Christian comes to be submissive to God whether he should save or destroy him, he then has an infallible evidence that he is a friend of God, and that God is his friend; which must remove his painful doubts.

"*Objection* 6. — There are other difficulties still, attending this speculation. A state of future misery, involves a state of future disobedience and rebellion against God. And we have already seen that submission can never be opposed to obedience. Submission to a state of future disobedience is absolute rebellion.

"*Answer.* — It is granted that present submission is inconsistent with present disobedience. No person in the actual exercise of submission to God, can, by that actual submission, disobey God. But how does it appear, that present submission to God is inconsistent with future disobedience to him? Does not a real Christian, in the morning of life, desire that God would not take him away in the midst of his days, but allow him to live longer in this world? But does he not expect, that, if he should live to the common age of man, he shall be guilty of more or less disobedience to God in that period? Is he not, then, willing, at present, to disobey God in future? And is his present willingness to disobey God in future, when he has told him that he shall not be perfect in this life, present disobedience? It is real submission to a certain, expected evil, which he hates in its own nature. But if a Christian may be submissive to God, in appointing him to disobedience in time, why may he not be submissive to God, in appointing him to disobedience in eternity? Supposing God had told Lucifer, the day before he disobeyed, I have determined that to-morrow you shall disobey. Ought not Lucifer to have said, from the heart, I submit: Not my will, but thine be done? And had he felt and said this, would his submission to future disobedience, have been present, actual disobedience? I leave it to Mr. S. to solve these cases of conscience, which I have mentioned.

"*Objection* 7. — But the question sometimes comes up in this form: If we could be assured, that it would be for the glory of God that we should be cast off, ought we not to acquiesce? And, in answer to this, I have simply to observe that such an assurance is absolutely impossible. God cannot break his promises. God cannot

Digitized by Google

change his character. It cannot be for his glory that those should be miserable for ever, who are submissive to his will. Of what use is it, then, to state and reason from cases that are impossible ones, and subversive of the whole nature and government of God, if they should occur? Much more, how can it be a test of Christian character, to conjecture how we should act and feel, or ought to act and feel, in cases that are actually impossible?

"*Answer.* — It is readily conceded, that a Christian, who does not know nor believe that he is a Christian, cannot be assured that it would be for the glory of God that he should be cast off; and it is asserted, on the other hand, that a Christian, who does not know nor believe that he is a Christian, cannot be assured that it would be for the glory of God that he should be saved. For God cannot break his promises, nor his purposes. The Christian, who does not know that he is a Christian, cannot know what God's purposes are respecting him; and therefore, it is his present duty to be willing that He should execute his purposes, whether they are in his favor or against him. His present state of uncertainty requires him to exercise present submission, whether his future state should be either happy or miserable. And his present submission or opposition to God, in his present state of uncertainty, is a criterion, to determine whether he feels right or wrong at present; but not to determine whether he is a real Christian or not. For though he may feel wrong in his present state of darkness, he may afterwards feel right, as Jacob did, after he had refused to submit and be comforted.

"*Objection* 8. — It is again asked, Is it not the duty of those who are cast off, to submit to their condition? And if you will only view this question as it respects different considerations, it is very easy to answer it. As to that part of the future state of condemnation, which involves disobedience and rebellion, it is no duty to submit to this, but to become obedient and cease from rebellion. And in regard to actual misery, fallen spirits are bound to acknowledge the justice of God in it, and their full desert of it. But it is their duty to repent and reform, and, were it possible, to deliver themselves from misery, though we have reason to believe that they will never do this.

"*Answer.* — The spirits in prison are undoubtedly bound cordially to acknowledge the justice of God in punishing them for ever, and cordially to acknowledge the sovereignty of God in continuing them in a state of moral depravity for ever. And the cordial acknowledgment of both the justice and sovereignty of God towards them, I should call perfect submission to God, both as to their sinfulness and misery.

"Mr. S. concludes his arguments or objections against unconditional submission with the following general observations, which deserve some notice:

"'On the whole it is a matter of regret, that this subject has been agitated in our churches. It is easy to perceive that much has been said upon it, without definite ideas of the nature of true submission; and much said against it with mistaken apprehensions of the design of those who advocate the affirmative. What is aimed at, I take to be these simple truths: The will of God is the rule of right, and creatures ought to submit to that will; the law of God is perfectly just, and we ought to approve of it, though it condemn our conduct; we ought to feel that we deserve to be cast off, and it is mere grace which delivers us from destruction. To these truths we all accede. Why not inculcate them, then, in this simple and intelligible form, and not endeavor to impress them by the statement of cases which are revolting to the feelings and impossible in the nature of things! Most of the disputants upon these subjects seem to me to have left submission undefined, and not to have distinguished between active obedience and suffering with resignation, or shown how the one stood related to the other, or that the one can never interfere with the other.'

Digitized by Google

"*Answer.*—Will not all those who are finally cast off at the last day, be constrained to accede, in their understandings and consciences, to these simple truths: 'That the will of God is the rule of right, and creatures ought to submit to that will; that the law of God is perfectly just, and they ought to approve of it, though it condemn their conduct; that they ought to feel that they deserve to be cast off, and that it would have been mere grace to have delivered them from eternal sin and misery?'

"But will those who are finally cast off exercise any true submission? Is a sense of moral obligation to obey God the same as obeying him? Is a sense of our desert of being punished for disobeying God, the same as submitting to his hand and heart in punishing us? Is there any thing in Mr. S.'s definition of submission, that an unregenerate man, remaining unregenerate, may not feel and express?

"I regret that the doctrine of unconditional submission, has not been better defined, and more repeatedly and forcibly inculcated in our churches than it ever has been, and especially of late. 'Young men think old men to be fools;' but it would be well if young men would remember the last clause of the proverb.

"Yours, affectionately,

"NATHANAEL EMMONS."

In his discourse on Disinterested Submission, Professor Stuart acknowledges that the Hopkinsian doctrine is frequently misunderstood, and therefore, the true doctrine should be stated in a more "simple and intelligible" form. The preceding letter of Emmons illustrates the facility of misapprehending him. He represents a good man as "willing at present, to disobey God in future." But he does not mean to convey the idea which these words often suggest. He does not mean that this willingness of men to commit sin, should be at all different in kind, from the willingness of God that men commit sin. He means, that in whatever sense God has decreed that men do wrong, in that same sense should men have a holy willingness that the decree be executed. Their willingness should be as holy as his. If they would always, as they *can* always, retain this holy willingness, they would never, as they *should* never, commit a sin, be it decreed or not decreed. Emmons was firm in maintaining, that no will or purpose of God can ever obligate men to do wrong, or excuse men for doing wrong; and that, as Jehovah never decrees sin *as sin* but only as connected with some good, so men should never be willing to commit sin *as sin*, but only as an act connected with some good; and they never *should* in any way commit the sin which, in a holy way, they should be *as* willing to commit, as God is willing to have them commit; *no more willing, no less willing, no otherwise willing*, in their *limited* measure, than he is in his *unlimited* expansion. Emmons's theory of good men's *willingness* to sin, corresponds with his theory of *God's decree* that men sin. If his decree be right, then, according to Emmons, their willingness to have the decree executed, is right. If his decree does not imply *his* love of sin, their willingness to have it fulfilled does not imply *their* love of sin. If his decree is totally inconsistent with *his* doing wrong, their willingness to have his decree executed is totally inconsistent with *their* doing wrong. If *they* ought not to be willing, in any sense, to have his decree of their sin fulfilled, then *he* ought not, in any sense, to be willing to have his decree fulfilled. Where *his* willingness goes, *their* willingness should go; where his willingness stops, their willingness should stop. For they do not submit to *their own act*, but to *his*; not to their *sin*, but to his *decree*.

Whether this doctrine, balanced and guarded, can be made intelligible to common laymen, or common clergymen, is a question on which Dr. Emmons and Professor Stuart entertained widely different notions. The doctrine was regarded by Emmons as one part of the *plain* truth, that the will of man should be *one* with the will of God.



Digitized by Google

The willingness to abandon every selfish good for the well-being of the universe, was not, with Dr. Emmons, so much a theory as a principle, not a principle so much as a life. If he could give up *all*, he would give up a *part*. The wave that rolled through eternity, would roll through time. He believed in missions that cost self-denial, for he taught that as men should give up their future life, if needed, so they should give up their present life, and of course their houses and lands, for the kingdom of God. In his views of self crucifixion, he reminded one of the Archbishop of Cambray. Fenelon was born indeed under sunnier skies than Emmons, and lived in a more polished society. But there was a striking resemblance between the tendencies of the two men to exalt Jehovah, and annihilate self; to look upon eternal happiness as a small good in the comparison with virtue, and eternal misery as a small evil in the comparison with sin. When the opposers of Emmons have indulged in asperity of remark with regard to his willingness to be lost for the glory of God, they have borrowed the style, and perhaps too the spirit, in which Bossuet and his adherents aspersed the disinterested love of Fenelon; and the following remark of the Pope, in his attempt to compound the matter and avoid an immediate decision against Fenelon, will apply, with some modification, to Emmons, and those who have ridiculed him for his theory of disinterestedness: "The Bishop of Cambray loves his Maker too much, his opposers love their neighbor too little."

Views of disinterested love exerted an influence upon Emmons in his mode of expressing his religious emotions. He aimed to avoid both the appearance and the reality of loving God from merely selfish motives. He disliked to represent his own eternal happiness as any thing more than a unit amid innumerable and greater interests; and when, in his ninety-fourth year, he was asked by a distinguished divine, calling on him as a stranger, "How do you feel about your salvation?" he recoiled from exposing his inward life; he did not know but that his private remarks might find their way to the public; he dreaded to imply that he was any thing more than a mote in the air: "If I never get to heaven, others will," he replied, and he considered himself as compressing into these words the pithy remark: "My own eternal happiness is but a drop in the ocean; I choose to talk about the ocean, rather than about the drop." He could converse about himself in the comparison with creatures, but when his relations to the Creator were the theme he was awed down into a submissive silence. He would interrupt that silence in the circle of his bosom friends; but when a stranger intermeddled with his hidden experience, he became jealous of himself, he shrunk back from the slightest temptation to magnify his own importance, and to blazon abroad his own goodness. In nothing did he avoid ostentation so much

Digitized by Google

as in the record of his religious life. We need not affirm that he never carried his reticence too far. He was not one of the perfect men who find their home in biographies. His diffident nature betrayed him into some faults, while it allured him into some virtues. It gave new force to his dread of appearing to proclaim the worth of his moral character. His advice to a young convert was, "First, maintain a uniform Christian deportment; secondly, never make great pretensions to piety. Those who make great pretensions, too often become like Peter at the Judgment Hall. Their diaries are too often the records of religious vanity."

G. — He aimed to make his Creed illustrate the Fitness of Humility and Penitence.

Schleiermacher has endeavored to resolve all religious character into the feeling of dependence on God. Emmons did not venture into this extreme, but he portrays, more vividly than Schleiermacher, our dependence on our Sovereign for all positive happiness as well as for release from punishment, for the continuance as well as the commencement of the new life, for all our opportunities of action, for all our ability to act, for our very being. But it was a Formative Principle of the creed of Emmons to aim at the excitement of humility, as *penitence* for sin, more than as *lowliness* for frailty. It recognizes the real power with which God has endued us, and thus discloses our guilt for abusing this power. It exhibits transgression as a chosen act to be repented of, rather than as a necessitated calamity to be mourned over. It insists on the essential, intrinsic baseness of sin; and declares that Omnipotence itself can never efface its ill desert; that even the atonement, while it washes away the stain of *punishment*, can never wash away the stain of guiltiness, for past rebellion; that even if sin be the necessary occasion of the greatest good,[1] it remains immutably and eternally vile and hate-

[1] While believing that sin is the necessary *occasion* on which God produces the highest good, Emmons disclaims the belief that sin is the necessary *means* of the highest good. His language on this topic has an historical importance, as it stands in sharp contrast with the language of Dr. Taylor of New Haven. Indeed, the spirit and aim of the New Haven Professor on this theme, cannot be fully appreciated, without setting his form of speculation over against that of the Franklin divine. Neither can the Letters of Professor Woods to Professor Taylor, be well understood, without considering the degree in which these Letters follow the general speculations of Emmons. The substance of these speculations is found in the writings of John Calvin, and even in some passages of John Wesley. As Emmons guarded his own theory, he did not consider it liable to the danger of impairing a godly sorrow for sin. It was attended with no such peril in his own mind, wonted as his mind was to distinctions that escape the notice of inferior men. I gratefully own that, with regard to the reasons for the Divine Purpose concerning the introduction of evil into the world, I have learned more from certain *suggestions* of Emmons, than from any American divine; but his *suggestions* appear to me more profound and more accurate than his formal *theory*, and they prepare the way for a different theory, which he intimated rather than held; and which may be more conducive than his own, to the

Digitized by Google

ful, for it is the free uprising of a rebel against a *fair, equitable,* and *lovely* Father. Therefore the fit *degree* of penitence for sin consists in "lying as low as possible" before God, confessing the justness of our eternal woe, and submitting to him in all his punitive inflictions. "To raise God high, to bring man low," was the aim of the two Millington preachers, Brainerd and Emmons. It was a characteristic remark of the man last named: "We know the nature of sin better than the nature of *any other object* around us; for we have *heard,* and *read,* and *seen,* and *felt,* more of its evil and fatal effects, than of any other object in the whole circle of our knowledge, observation, or experience."

H. — He aimed to make his Theology both stimulating and comprehensive.

The genius of a divine is evinced in his combination of vivid with expanded views of truth. Emmons was wonderful in his union of intensity with comprehensiveness. He instinctively uncovered the point of one doctrine, as if this were the only doctrine; and then instinctively displayed the edge of another truth, as if *that* were the only truth, although it appears to be in collision with the first; but he did not stop here, as narrow minds would stop, for he then instinctively unfolded the real agreement between the two seemingly discordant ideas. A one-sided theologian, having given edge to one fact, will put velvet on the edge of an apparently opposing fact. Emmons was many-sided, and he took no pains to blunt the point of any truth, on account of his having developed the sharp point of a different truth. His creed is termed stiff and angular, because he lets men see the acute angles of so many doctrines, and never attempts to dull their edge. The bare naked points of his creed make it stimulating. Its pungent influence is seen in the Sketches of his pupils. Men in common life said that it put them on a rolling wheel, and tossed them about from one revolving shaft to another, from one moving cog to another, and gave them no time for sleep. Men of learning said, that his creed was a galvanic battery, and they could not remain in drowsiness under the shocks of it. Narrow-minded men have been amazed at his boldness in even attempting to combine the positive with the negative pole of his creed. "He is more acute than comprehensive," says one of his opponents: "He has too great fondness for the symmetrical combination of doctrines," replies another opponent. With all his love for startling theories, he did unite a more ardent love for

penitence which he aimed to foster. "Certainly," says Dr. Withington in Bib. Sac. V. 626, "no man can read him [Emmons], without many suggestions, which a mind far less fertile than that of the author of them may work into permanent and useful truths."

Digitized by Google

their union in a system. He teaches a sober lesson to those desultory theologians, who let their words flare into seeming contradictions without any attempt to reconcile them. "Consistency," says Emmons, "is the beauty and ornament, if not the essence of good preaching." He regarded it as the great labor of his life, to draw out two parallel lines of doctrine in regard to various topics; each line, differing from the other, for there were *two* lines; neither contravening the other, for they were *parallel* lines; both projected in singular correspondence with each other, both admitting the brightest colors, both tending to form a compacted whole with unity amid variety. Those who regard him as a giant with a keen vision but only one eye, ought to bring together the sharp corners of his system, and look at the variety of them when placed side by side. That man must aim to be a comprehensive thinker, and not a contracted partisan, who holds out for seventy years in an attempt to evolve a scheme of Consistent Calvinism, and to combine in it such propositions as are here arranged in parallel columns.

*Emmons has been accused of exaggerating the Dependence of Men.*

"Since the first and best of men sinned and fell, all his posterity have sufficient evidence of being *absolutely dependent* upon God, without whose special influence they *can* neither *become* nor *continue* holy and happy." (Works, II. 595.)

"No man *can* [*i. e. will*] be holy without the special grace of God." On the other hand, aiming at faithfulness to both sides, this intrepid reasoner affirms: "While Adam was placed in such a perfectly holy and happy situation, it is extremely difficult to conceive how he should be led into sin, without the *immediate interposition* of the Deity." . . . . "It is in vain to attempt to account for the first sin of the first man by the *instrumentality of second causes*. And until we are willing to admit the *interposition of the supreme first Cause*, we must be content to consider the fall of Adam as an unfathomable mystery." (Works, II. 553.)

By "interposition," Emmons here means an interposition of new influences, or a *change* of the former influences. By "*the instrumentality of second causes*," he means the *mere influence of motives, etc., without any attendant and governing agency of God*. He means nothing more than is meant by the Westminster Assembly in their Confession, V. 6.

*Emmons has been accused of exaggerating the Freedom of Men.*

Men are bound to promise that, whether they receive the special aid of Divine Grace or not, they will "love God *supremely* and — *obey him perfectly, universally, constantly*, and *perpetually*, as long as they exist in this world, and in the world to come, and seal their promise by the solemnity of an oath." . . . .

"Some have thought that *there is a condition* to be understood in the promise on man's part. Accordingly some have inserted a condition in their church covenant, and required the professor only to say, 'I will, *by divine grace* or *the grace of God assisting*, walk in all the commandments of the Lord constantly and perpetually.' But *we find no such condition, or reserve*, in the covenant which God required the children of Israel to make at Mount Sinai; and for this good reason, that such a condition and reserve would have destroyed all the obligation of the covenant with respect to the great majority of those who entered into covenant on that solemn occasion." (Works, III. 596.)

These bold words are designed to be correlate with the Biblical oath: "*All* that the Lord hath said *will we do, and be obedient*." Emmons believed that "any man can sincerely promise to do what he knows he *can* do, and really *desires* and *intends* to do." (Works, III. 600.)

Digitized by Google

*Rejoicing in God amid all the mournful events which take place under his Providence.*

"Notwithstanding the ten thousand natural and moral evils that abound all over the world, and wring the hearts of multitudes every day with anguish and sorrow, there is always abundant reason to *rejoice in* God." — "How is it possible, that we should obey his command to *rejoice always*, and yet obey his command to *mourn sometimes?*" — "There is *always* a good reason to rejoice in holiness and happiness, but *no* good reason *ever* to rejoice in sin and misery." — "There *is* just cause to mourn for creatures, but *no* just cause to mourn for God." (Orig. Ed. VI. 140, 141.)

*Mourning for events which take place under the Providence of God.*

"It cannot be denied that there have been, from the beginning of the world to this day, thousands and millions of things under the divine government, which are *proper objects of regret, sorrow, and mourning. Every natural and moral evil that has ever taken place in any part of God's extensive dominion, is an object of mourning and sorrow.*" (Orig. Ed. VI. 140.) — "*It seems as though the ministering angels could not endure to discharge their office in this world, where they are constrained to witness so many dreadful scenes and objects*; but they have eyes to see God in all, which fills them with raptures of admiration and joy." (Works, II. 506.)

*God — The Cause of Moral Evil.*

"There is but one true and satisfactory answer to be given to the question which has been agitated for ages, *Whence came evil?* — and that is, *It came from the great First Cause of all things.*" (Works, II. 683.) — The controversy between Emmons and some of his opponents on this theme is a curious one. They believe that God has created within us a nature which is sinful. He denies it, for this, among other reasons, that such a belief makes God the author of sin which man has no freedom in committing. He believes that God produces the wrong exercises of a free agent. They deny this theory, because it makes God the author of sin. Their doctrine makes God the cause of a moral evil which we have *no* agency in committing; his doctrine makes God the cause of a moral evil which we *have* an agency in committing. "They censure me," he once remarked, "for declaring that God creates sin; but do they know, or not, that they believe the same but do not declare it? They blame me for denying free agency; but I assert it, and they virtually deny it. I teach, that God creates within us free moral exercises. Can they say, that exercises which are *created free* are not free? One of my opposers once said in a sermon, that an exercise which is not self-originated cannot be voluntary, and if it is *made* free, it is *not* free. But this man was by birth an Irishman."

*The Sinner — the Cause of his own Moral Evil.*

"When they [sinners] clearly see, and sensibly feel, that all their depravity and criminality consists in their free and voluntary exercises of selfishness, they can no longer plead it as an excuse for impenitence and unbelief, because they know that it *depends upon their own choice*, whether they shall love or hate God, whether they shall continue in, or cease from sin, whether they shall accept or reject the offers of mercy, and whether they shall be saved or lost." (Works, II. 701.)

Men's "dependence on God, and his controlling power over them, are perfectly consistent with their enjoying *the same free moral agency that God himself enjoys.*" (Works, II. 457.)

"Dr. John Taylor [of Norwich] pleads that holiness consists in the free, voluntary choice of the agent. This is undoubtedly true, and agreeable to the dictates of common sense." (Works, II. 545.)

"Whether they act virtuously or viciously, their actions are their own, and the praise or the blame is their own, as much as if they acted independently." (Works, II. 417.)

"They have never been necessarily drawn into sin by any corrupt nature or corrupt principle derived from Adam. They have sinned freely and voluntarily, and *have therefore destroyed themselves.*" (Works, II. 601, 602.)

Digitized by Google

*Adam's Sin determines the Moral Character of his Posterity.*

"It is true, indeed, his [Adam's] first offence, according to the divine design, *determined* the event of our becoming sinners. But the design of God never laid any of his creatures under a necessity of sinning. God designed that Adam should fall, and from eternity provided a remedy for it; but God's design laid him under no necessity of falling, nor of accepting the remedy provided." (Works, II. 600.) "God appointed Adam to be the public head of his posterity; and determined, in case of his disobedience, that they should begin to sin before they should begin to be holy. This determination God has executed, *by directly operating on the hearts of children, when they first become moral agents.*" (Works, II. 623.)

Here as elsewhere, Emmons means to teach, that in whatever manner God has *decreed* the existence of sin, in that same manner does he *secure the occurrence* of sin; that the divine *agency* keeps pace with the divine *determination;* that the *providence* of God embraces the *same principles*, and has the *same extent*, with the *decrees* of God; that there is no more objection to the doctrine of divine *efficiency* securing the *occurrence* of all things, than to the doctrine of divine *purposes* securing the *certainty* of all things. This is one part of his "*Consistent* Calvinism."

*Adam's Sin leaves his Posterity free.*

"If he [Adam] had transmitted to us a corrupt nature, or a sinful principle, we might have had some ground to suppose that we were *obliged* to sin by the fatal influence of his first transgression. But since that sin neither directly nor indirectly ever affected either our natural or moral faculties, it is certain that we *act as freely and voluntarily in committing sin, as we could have done* if Adam had never sinned, nor stood in the least connection with us." (Works, II. 600.) — "Whenever they [all men] become moral agents, and capable of exercising sinful affections, they *at that time became capable of exercising holy affections.*". . . . "Why do they begin to sin before they ever begin to be holy? Here it is evident, that it is not because they are not *as capable of exercising holy affections*, as unholy and sinful ones." (Works, II. 622.) — "*As soon as they* [children] *become capable of exercising selfishness, they become capable of exercising benevolence;* or, as soon as they become capable of exercising morally good, they are capable of exercising morally evil affections." (Works, II. 619.) — "They did not begin to sin *before* they became free, moral agents. Their first sinful exercises were as really criminal, as any of their past sinful exercises. They began to sin freely and voluntarily, as Adam did at first; and they have always continued to sin freely and voluntarily." (Works, II. 629.)

### I. — He aimed to make his Theology Biblical.

"For many years his father lived on the very verge of a precipice, near a high and sharp ledge of rocks, at the foot of which flowed a swift brook." — *Memoir, p.* 2.

This was the birthplace of Emmons. His mind, too, was at home amid scenes of peril. He did employ language that makes men shudder. He had for so many years looked with so sharp an eye through such intricate themes, that he did not recognize the troubles which men, less keen-sighted and far-reaching, would feel, when they had not devoted so many hours as he had devoted months to these perplexing themes. He did utter stern words. We are appalled by them. "How could he," we ask, for we know him to have been a man of Christian tenderness, "how could he, then, have uttered such and so many bold orientalisms as terrify an occidental critic?" This question suggests its own answer. *He deemed it his duty to employ the sublime words of Jewish poets in the*

Digitized by Google

*prosaic statements of Christian doctrine.*[1] Dr. James W. Alexander says, that the sermons of Emmons "were in a remarkable degree, clear and icy metaphysical reasonings." But all who are familiar with him know, that a warm heart throbbed within his manly breast. He loved his fellow-men. He loved his Sovereign more. He loved the *words* of his Monarch. He loved the *idioms* which the Adorable One selected for the *revelation* of divine truths. "Dr. Emmons! you do not interpret the Bible aright! That phrase is a Hebrew idiom." "*It is a divine idiom,*" was the memorable reply. His recent opposers imagine him to have been ignorant of the fact, that the idiomatic phrases of the Hebrew Bible are figurative. *He knew this fact before these opposers were born.* He used the phrases *as figurative.* He revered them as divinely *inspired* figures. He did not stop to explain them as metaphorical; for *men who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost* did not pause, apologize, and say, "*These are tropes.*" Emmons aimed to move straight onward, as the writers of the Bible had marked out his path. Here was the *piety* of his life, in catching with delight the verbal indications of what he deemed the mind of the Most High. Here was his religious sensibility both quick and deep, in repeating the phrases which he found in his copy of the Sacred Record. "Why do you not select more scientific terms?" "I choose to speak not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth." Is there a rising prejudice against the evangelical worth and virtue of the Old Testament? Emmons is moved to illustrate his favorite opinion, that the Apostles lose their authority if Moses and the Prophets be undervalued; and it is a noteworthy fact, that of three hundred and sixty-eight sermons from his pen, one hundred and twenty are founded on texts in the Old Testament. Is there an increasing tendency to discard capital punishment, and all the sterner forms of civil justice, and all the severer features of Calvinistic theology? Emmons rose up against the effeminate spirit, and quoted the Imprecatory Psalms. He has been ridiculed for affirming that "God justifies all true believers by *Will,*" and "*bequeaths legacies* to his children," makes them "*legatees*" "upon certain terms or *provisos.*" But Emmons would never have employed these phrases, if he had not

[1] The author of this Memoir, while he does not agree with the subject of it in regard to the wisdom of adopting the poetical phrases of inspired men as the common nomenclature of scientific theology, cannot forbear to add, that he regards the writings of Emmons as suggestive, though not as a faultless representative, of the manner in which uninspired reasoners should employ, in their didactic treatises, the overwhelming poetry and oriental idioms of inspiration. There is a volume of meaning compressed in his narrative of a certain minister who took for his text, "The Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart," and who affirmed, for the proposition of his discourse, that the Lord did not harden Pharaoh's heart; and on leaving the church, was asked, "which his hearers must believe, his sermon or his text?"

Digitized by Google

aimed to meet the Bible at every point, to *concur* with it whenever he met it, to follow out all its *varieties* of style, and to unfold the meaning of the last and the *New Testament* made by the Infinite Father to his offspring. So resolute was this reverent man in copying the idiomatic phrases of the inspired Model, that he has been censured as a slave to the *letter* of that Model. On the other hand, he aimed to be so rational in explaining the import of these phrases, that he has been censured for exalting certain First Principles of philosophy above the revealed word. "He had a double soul," says Dr. Withington, and men are in a dispute whether he was too pertinacious as a literal Biblicist, or too rationalistic as a philosophical interpreter.[1]

A suggestive characteristic of Emmons as a theologian is, that he never seems to falter in his nomenclature. He is such an erect Calvinist that he will not stoop to utter an apologetic phrase, or betray a hesitating, staggering purpose. If he had condescended to explain the words uttered in one sermon by the words uttered in another, he would have mollified the paragraphs which are condemned as harsh. But then he would have been less galvanic than he is now, and he would have unveiled a wavering mind, instead of the unbending Genevan spirit. He would never have deigned to utter the following paraphrase of the most unpopular sentences in the most unpopular of his discourses (Works, II. 391, 392); and yet, all the important words of this paraphrase are taken from his scattered publications, or conversational remarks. When they are gathered up and placed in juxtaposition, they are uncongenial with the *style* of the independent bishop; but they are a fit commentary on his *real meaning.*

"*It is often thought and said, that nothing more was necessary on God's part, in order to fit Pharaoh for destruction, than barely to leave him to himself. But God knew, that no external means and motives would be sufficient of themselves to form his moral character.* [Do you not remember, how often I have quoted the words of Paul, '*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves;*' in God '*we live, and move, and have our being;*' if he leave us to our own strength, we cease to exist. I now proceed with my discourse.] *He determined, therefore, to operate on his heart itself, and cause him to put forth certain evil exercises in the view of certain external motives.* [Does this

[1] When Professor Stuart began his philological career at Andover, he made various remarks which seemed to indicate, that men must examine the words of the Bible, without any preconceived opinion in regard to any ethical or religious truth. In 1817 Emmons published a Discourse in opposition to the spirit of those remarks. This discourse has been ably reviewed by Dr. Leonard Withington, in the Bibliotheca Sacra, Vol. V. pp. 625–633. In one of his earlier sermons, Emmons enunciated his favorite principle of interpretation thus: "*Texts* ought never to be adduced to explain and establish any *first principles*; but *first principles* are to be adduced to explain and establish the sense of every *text* of Scripture. It is easy to select particular passages, which, without a true explanation, will appear to support the most absurd doctrine that ever was imbibed and propagated."



Digitized by Google

offend you? Do you prefer to say, that the laws of his nature operated on Pharaoh's heart? That is what I mean, provided that the laws of nature are, as Sir Isaac Newton calls them, 'the established modes of *God's operation*.' Do you choose to say, that motives caused Pharaoh to put forth evil exercises? That is what I mean, provided that the motives are not regarded as independent of Divine efficiency; for all the motives that influence us are suggested by the laws of nature, and these laws are the established modes of *God's operation*, and what motives do instrumentally, God must do ultimately, else he is not the *Universal Cause*. I now continue my discourse.] *When Moses called upon him to let the people go, God stood by him and moved him to refuse.* [I am accused of believing, that the soul of Pharaoh was a *mere series of exercises produced by a Foreign Power*. But no. God stood by *him* and moved *him*, a *person* existing as really as the person of God exists. But I go on with my sermon.] *When Moses interceded for him and procured him respite, God stood by him and moved him to exult in his obstinacy.* [Do you think this language unscientific? it is *better* than scientific; it is *Biblical;* for we read, '*the night following the Lord stood by him;*' and '*the angel of the Lord stood by him;*' and, '*they have moved me to jealousy;*' *the Lord* '*moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel;*' and, *God* '*moved them to depart from him;*' and '*they moved him to jealousy with their graven images;*' and God says, '*I will move them to jealousy;*' a *motive* is that which *moves*, and motives are suggested by *natural* law, and that is a *Providential* law, and that is an *operation* of God. But I return to my sermon.] *When the people departed from his kingdom, God stood by him, and moved him to pursue after them with increased malice and revenge.* [I tell you now, as I have often told you before, that '*I use this phraseology because it is scriptural.*' But I proceed.] *And what God did on such particular occasions, he did at all times.* [Do you look upon this as unfair? Not so; for, on all these occasions, God left Pharaoh with '*as much power to do right as to do wrong;*' during all this time God made it '*as easy*' for him to act right as to act wrong; yea more, at all times, God leaves it '*easier for a man to do well than to do ill.*' When he *moves* moral agents, he does not *compel* them. But I resume my thread of remark.] *He continually hardened his heart, and governed all the exercises of his mind, from the day of his birth to the day of his death.* [Do you complain again, of this language? The meekest man on the face of the earth was inspired to say eleven times, that the Lord *would* or *did harden Pharaoh's heart.* '*And the Lord said unto Moses:—Go in unto Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart.*' '*And I, behold I, will harden the hearts of the Egyptians.*' Moses also informs us of Sihon king of Heshbon, 'the Lord *thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate.*' Even the beloved disciple quotes from Esaias the words: *God* '*hath blinded their eyes and hardened their heart.*' Do you condemn me for quoting the same words? Do you complain, that these words are figurative? I know they are. But do not men find fault with my style, because it is too literal, and prosaic, and bald? How *shall* I speak? If I pipe, men will not dance; if I mourn, they will not lament. If I write in plain language, I am blamed for not writing in metaphors; if I employ metaphors, I am blamed for not employing plain language. But I go back to my sermon.] '*This was absolutely necessary to prepare him for his final state. All other methods without this would have failed of fitting him for destruction.*' [Do you shrink from saying: 'God *prepared* Pharaoh'? '*For this* very purpose have I *raised*, or as some interpret it, *roused, stirred thee up, that I may show my power in thee;*' '*the vessels of wrath fitted to* (or *prepared for*) *destruction.*' Do you shrink from these inspired words? I stand where the Bible stands. I say what the Bible says. If the Bible sanctions Hebrew idioms, they are good enough for my sermons. Are they wise idioms? you ask. The Wise Teacher has recommended

Digitized by Google

them. — Are they safe? *It is always safe to copy the words of Inspiration.* Are they not too bold for modest men to use? I have said to you often, and I say to you once more: '*Arrogance consists in denying what God has asserted, but modesty in believing and maintaining it.*' *To deny what God has asserted*; 'to be *wise above what is written,* — *this is real arrogance and presumption, in whomsoever it is found.*' Men have called me presumptuous, because I have said that God *makes* men sin. I have used this word, because the readers of our English Bible are wont to hear it in such verses as, '*Make* the heart of this people fat, and *make* their ears heavy.' You tell God '*will strike wicked men with giddiness and stupidity*;' and again he says: '*If you* me that these verses are figurative. But they imply what John Calvin says, that *must come to the predestination of God.*' I know that in the phrase, 'By one man's *inquire into the first cause* [of the spiritual blindness with which men are visited] *we* disobedience many were *made* sinners;' the word, *made*, should be exchanged for *constituted.* But *in whatever sense* men were put into the place of sinners, they were put there by a divine decree; and *in whatever sense* God decreed to *constitute* them sinners, in that same sense he *fulfilled* his own decree; and when he *constituted* them sinners, he secured the certainty that they would sin; and when I say that he *made* men sin, I mean nothing more than that he *made* a decree that they sin, and *made* his Providence fulfil his decree."

### § 3. *The Creed of Emmons is generally misapprehended.*

Forming an exaggerated estimate of his perspicuity, men have not searched for the recondite idea that lies under his facile style. Knowing that he has conversed as a brother with friends who are yet in the noon of their life, men have interpreted his words by the standard of the present age, instead of interpreting them by the standard of the age to which he belonged. If he had died in 1810, when sixty-five years old, he would have been estimated more correctly than he is now, having died in 1840, when ninety-five years old. If he had written scholastic treatises on theology, he would have made a fuller development of his belief, than he could make in insulated discourses. He used various terms, as *heart, will, efficiency,* etc., in a peculiar sense, and these peculiarities of diction have been unheeded by his critics. Overlooking the Formative Principles of his creed, men have not explained it according to his intent in stating it, but according to their own ideas or suspicions. Some of the Principles which guided his reasonings, we have considered already. Others will be suggested by the following notice of the particulars in which he has been misapprehended.

#### A. — He has been supposed to teach that the Soul is a mere Series of Exercises.

He has been so understood by President Dwight of New Haven, Professors Woods and Stuart of Andover, Richards of Auburn, Anderson of Maryville, and others. It has been forgotten, that one great aim of Emmons was to emphasize the truths, that man is a moral *agent*, and has

Digitized by Google

a nature the substance of which is *spiritual*. His early interest in the Infidel controversy (see pp. 363–4, above), prompted him to make his representations of the human soul diverge as far as possible from the *materialistic*. He therefore chose not to speak of the mind as a *thing* but as an *agent*, not as a *substratum* but as a *person*; he is emphatic in discriminating between an *act* and a *motion*, and is so eager to make men believe in the *activity*, by which he means the *voluntariness*, of all moral character, that he uses terms which seem to represent activity as the very essence of the soul. His ontological and psychological views may be explained by the sentences in the annexed columns. See Orig. Ed. I. 321, 322, 339; III. 339; IV. 351, 356, 508, 522; V. 124, 138, 246, 535, 539; VI. 112, 119, 408.

*The Spirituality of the Soul; the Activity and Voluntariness of moral Character; the Impossibility of forming an idea of an inert, passive Soul; Activity Essential to the Nature of the Mind.*

The very nature of the soul "is all perception, sensibility, and activity;" "the very essence of the soul consists in perception, sensibility, activity, and volition;" "we are conscious of having perception, reason, conscience, memory, and volition; these are the essential properties of the soul, and in these properties the essence of the soul consists; we can form no conception of the soul as distinct from these properties, or as the *foundation* of them."

"We may as easily conceive that all holy affections should spring from that piece of flesh which is literally called the heart, as to conceive that they should spring from any principle *devoid of activity*."

"All we know about body are its properties; and all we know about mind are its properties; and, by knowing these, we know that matter and mind are essentially different; and, so long as they exist, they must be distinct existences."

"For it is impossible to conceive of a corrupt and sinful nature, *prior to*, and *distinct from*, corrupt and sinful exercises."

"If a *good* heart were distinct from love, then we could form a clear idea of

*The Soul is not a mere Series of Exercises, but possesses Powers, and is a Substance.*

The souls of sinners "comprise all their intellectual and moral *powers* that constitute *them* proper *persons*, or moral *agents*." [Emmons often recognizes the distinction between the *faculties* of the mind and its *actions*; between its *nature* and its *exercises*.] "To require or forbid any exercise or action without the heart, would be the same as to require or forbid an *act without an agent*, which is palpably absurd."

"We know that the soul—is not a material, but a spiritual *substance*."

"He [Jehovah] hates sinners *themselves*, who are depraved, who are selfish, who are impenitent, who are unbelieving, who are disobedient, and who are rebellious. Christ did not preach about *sin in the abstract*, as being an object of God's displeasure; but about *sinners themselves* being the objects of God's displeasure."

"There is no occasion for a *distinct* faculty of will, as has been generally supposed, in order to put forth external actions or internal exercises." [The theory of Emmons was, that the soul, *as a substance*, puts forth voluntary exercises, and it is inexpedient to ascribe these exercises to a *distinct* faculty. The theory implies, that there are *other* distinct faculties, and that the spiritual substance, *by its very nature*, performs the act of choice. It *is* not, then, mere choice or mere act.]

"We are not certain that the soul of the child does proceed directly from the parents." [By many such modes of expression, Emmons implies, that he regarded the soul as a substance; for if it be mere acts, it must necessarily pro-

Digitized by Google

*it* [as] *distinct from love.* But whenever we think of a *good* heart, either in ourselves or in others, we think of kind, tender, benevolent feelings, or the exercises of pure, divine love. And it is out of our power to conceive of a *good* heart, which is not wholly composed of good affections, or the genuine feelings of true benevolence."

ceed directly from God, and cannot possibly proceed from the parents, and the frankness of Emmons would not have allowed him to say, "*We are not* certain," etc. He implies the same in passages quoted on pp. 366, 374–383, 385, 386, 390–392, and others of this Memoir.]

A noted Sermon of Dr. Dwight, entitled: "The Soul not a Chain of Ideas and Exercises," was aimed at a theory supposed to be involved in the first of the preceding columns. That the words of this column were designed, not to deny the existence of the mental substratum, but to express, with an emphasis, the *activity* which is essential to the *soul*, and the *voluntariness* which is essential to *character*, is distinctly asserted in the following communication, addressed in 1857 to the author of this Memoir by a divine who was a son-in-law, a confidential friend, for twenty years a near clerical neighbor, of Emmons, and the editor of his Works.

*Letter of Rev. Jacob Ide, D. D.*

Emmons considered the soul as a spirit, or invisible *agent*, a conscious, intelligent, active agent, *capable* of knowing and doing the will of God, and by him placed under moral law, and held accountable for every act of obedience or disobedience to this law. In a manuscript sermon of Emmons upon Matt. 16: 20, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul," I find the following definition: "The soul is that immaterial, living, thinking *spirit*, which we are conscious of possessing, and which raises us above all the animal world, and which gives us the nearest resemblance to our Maker. Though the soul has neither form, nor extension, nor solidity, nor any of the properties of matter, yet it *has* powers and faculties which form a capacity for every thing that is great and noble." And in the progress of this discourse, he says that the capacity of the human soul for knowledge, usefulness, and happiness, is strictly infinite.

In a discourse on the superiority of men to animals, he says of man, that he has, not only the powers of perception and memory, and volition in common with other animals, but the power of reason, the power of imagination, the power of perceiving cause and effect and the marks of wisdom and design in all the works of nature and art, the power of distinguishing between truth and error, the capacity of uniting in affection with all intelligent beings and sensitive natures, and the faculty of distinguishing between right and wrong, or moral good and moral evil. Emmons has been charged with believing that there is no such thing as personality in the soul of man, or that in reality, there is, in the common acceptation of the word, no soul; but only certain exercises, without any real being to put them forth. He never believed any such thing. In his view the soul is that living and immortal *being, of whom* these exercises, so far as they are voluntary, are the accountable acts, and who will, in the day of retribution, be rewarded or punished, according to their conformity or nonconformity to the great law of love. He always spoke of love as the *act of a being*



Digitized by Google

that loved — of submission as an *act of a being* that submitted, — of repentance as an *act of a being* that repented, — of faith as an *act of a being* that believed, — of obedience as an *act of a being* that obeyed, — and of disobedience as an *act of a being* who transgressed the law of God. He did not believe that each of these acts was *without an actor*, that each of these effects was without a *human cause*, or that each of these virtues and vices came into existence without any one rightfully answerable for its moral quality. Nor did he consider them as the acts of God. Though he recognized the agency of God, as the *ultimate* source of all things, and as that to which *in this sense* they might all be ascribed, yet he considered the persons who put them forth, as their *only* proper and responsible *authors*. Pharaoh himself hardened his own heart, and was for that reason the proper object of censure, and *justly* deserving of the fearful judgments with which he was visited. It is a well known and favorite opinion of Emmons, that every man has a *natural* power to obey or disobey his Maker. He even asserts that *man has a natural*, but not moral, *power to frustrate God's decrees*. But if man is nothing in distinction from his acts, has no soul save the exercises that are required of him, and which he is said to put forth, what is this natural power to obey or disobey the will of God, — to conform to or oppose the divine decrees? He says of men (Vol. II. p. 476), "They are *real and proper agents* in all their voluntary exercises and exertions. Their actions are their own, and *as much their own* as if *they acted without any dependence upon God or any other being in the universe*. If a man loves God, his love is *his own exercise*, and a real virtue and beauty in his character. If a man hates God, his hatred is *his own* sin, and a blemish in his character." Again he says, "Unless God represented men as the *authors of their own actions*, he would not represent them in their true light." — (Vol. II. p. 437.) Now I ask: "If there is nothing in man *of* which *character* can be predicated, or *to* which it can be attached, — if there is no soul to put forth these exercises, — no person *whose own* they are, what did Emmons mean by the language he used?"

How the opinion originated, that he believed the soul of man to be a mere series of exercises, I do not know. If the opinion were correct, it *ought* to be *known* to have had its origin in his own unequivocal avowal. But although intimately acquainted with him for many years, I never heard him express this belief. I have inquired of those ministers nearer to him in age than myself, and who have enjoyed a better opportunity than I to know his views on this subject, and I can find none who ever heard him avow this opinion. There are now living, two very aged clergymen,[1] intimate and highly esteemed friends of his, accustomed to discuss with him, in a free and familiar manner, the principles of the gospel, for many years members with him of the same Association, and familiar with his remarks in that body, both of whom say unhesitatingly, that he did not believe the absurd opinion so frequently attributed to him. One of them[2] says that he conversed with the doctor particularly on this subject, and was told by him, that *he read the work of Berkeley, and was at first much perplexed with it, but when he read it the second time*, he saw its fallacy, and thought he could answer it.[3] After much inquiry on the subject, of his students in theology, and many of the

[1] Rev. Otis Thomson, of Abington, since dead, and Rev. Thomas Williams, of Providence.

[2] Rev. Mr. Williams.

[3] Knowing that the writings of Bishop Berkeley affected the speculations of *some* New England divines, and supposing that the Bishop exerted as *prolonged* an influence upon Dr. Emmons as upon Dr. West, and never having heard the foregoing positive testimony against this (common) supposition, the author of this Memoir wrote, what he now recalls, the statements concerning Emmons, which are found on pp. cliv., clv. of his Works, Orig. Ed.

Digitized by Google

church and people who heard him preach for years, I can find none who recollect the avowal of such views as are now frequently attributed to him.

He did, however, publish some things, which, to a careless or superficial reader, especially one disposed to disparage his theology, might give occasion to the report in question. For instance, he said that God creates the volitions of men. This has been assumed by some of his opponents as proof positive, that these exercises are connected with no personal soul as the responsible author. Their inference is, that if God creates the volitions of men, they are *his*, and not *their* acts, — that his agency necessarily excludes theirs. But this inference is entirely unauthorized, and in face of his oft-repeated and well-sustained assertion, that mankind are *active while* they are acted upon, in all their holy volitions. Those who make the above objection, seem to understand "*created*" here as a literal, and not a figurative expression, as though it were an act of physical power upon a material subject. But who does not know, that this very word is one which the Apostle uses, when he speaks of the influence of the Holy Spirit in changing the hearts of men? "For we are his *workmanship, created* in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath foreordained that we should walk in them." "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is *created* in righteousness and true holiness." Is not that divine influence upon the soul of man, by which he passes from death unto life, and makes progress in holiness rather than sin, here indicated by the word created? And did not David use the same word when he prayed for an influence from on high to purify his affections, and secure his continued obedience to the will of Heaven? "*Create* in me a clean heart, O God; renew a right spirit within me." Dr. Emmons was once asked why he used the word *create*, when he meant no more than the agency of God in forming the moral character of men. His answer was, "Because it is the word that the Bible uses when speaking on the same subject." He does not mean, that God, in this case, operates upon dead matter, — much less upon nothing at all, when he creates the volitions of men. But that he exerts a *spiritual* agency upon human souls, who have a *spiritual, active nature*, and this agency is suited to influence them to the exercise of the free and accountable volitions which he sees will fulfil his wise and holy designs. The inference, from the fact that the Doctor speaks of God's creating the volitions of men, that they have no souls to which they belong, is therefore entirely gratuitous and unauthorized.

He did deny, that there is any thing in the soul, of a *moral* nature, holy or sinful, besides its exercises. He was in the habit of saying, not only that we are conscious of nothing else, but that we know there is nothing else *holy* or *sinful*, because all holiness and sin consist in a conformity to, or transgression of the law of God. When combating his opponents of the Taste-Scheme, he would deny their right to assume that there was a *principle of holiness or sin*, back of all exercises of the soul, and from which, as their source, they all sprang. He charged them with reasoning from that of which they knew nothing, and of which, from the nature of the case, they could know nothing. Now it is not impossible, that his denial of the existence of *any thing sinful or holy* in the soul anterior to its exercises, may sometimes have been mistaken by his opponents for a denial of the existence of *any soul*, but its exercises. And considering the strong tendency of excited disputants to misrepresent their opponents with a view to make them odious, or gain an advantage of them, I would respectfully ask, Is it any more strange than many other things we know, that they should take occasion from his frank and repeated avowal of the latter, to charge him with the former?

In the opinion of Emmons, activity is essential to the nature of the soul. To suppose it in a state of inactivity, is to suppose it to be in the condition of a material substance, and to render it impossible to distinguish it, in our conceptions, from dead

Digitized by Google

matter. He says, "I know it is generally supposed, that the soul itself is distinct from all its perceptions, sensibility and exercises. But it seems impossible to form an idea of the soul without perception, sensibility and activity. A soul devoid of all such exercises, cannot be distinguished from a mere senseless and lifeless body."—(Vol. III. p. 725.) "We know that the soul has neither length, nor breadth, nor figure, nor visibility, nor any other property of matter; and consequently we know, that it is not a material, but a spiritual substance. As the soul is all spirit, so it is all activity. We can form no idea of a dormant, inactive spirit. Separate activity from the soul and its existence is not conceivable."—(Orig. Ed. VI. p. 408.) This language, often used by him, might lead some to think, and say, that he believed in no soul, but in mere exercises. But observe, he not only speaks of its existence, but calls it a spiritual *substance*, which is a plain recognition of it as a real being, to whom its properties and acts belong.

What if he does say, "We can form no idea of the soul as distinct from its essential properties?" What objection is there to this, if these properties belong to its spiritual nature, and cannot be separated without changing its nature? What if, as Emmons says, we can form no conception of the soul as the *foundation* of these properties, if, in fact, it has nothing in its nature that in the least degree resembles a foundation, or any other material object, but is a *purely* spiritual substance, of which no idea is possible, but that which is suggested by a consciousness of a spirit's actions? Is the impossibility of gaining a conception of the soul, *when the elements of which it is composed are separated from it*, decisive proof that none can be gained *when these remain?* Must we conclude, from the circumstance that there is no evidence of the soul's existence when its essential properties are all unseen, that there is no soul, when these are matters of consciousness every hour?

Emmons did not pretend to know all about the soul. He did not deny that there might be some substance, constitution, or nature that is unknowable. But he contended, that all we do know about it is purely spiritual, different entirely from every thing material. True, he did say that the properties of the soul constitute its essence, as much as the properties of matter constitute *its* essence. But by essence he meant here, in both cases, *nominal* essence, or that which is knowable,—the properties, and not the real essence;—not as Locke would say, "the constitution of its invisible parts, on which its properties depend, which are unknowable to us." Emmons did not deny that there is a *real* essence of the soul, he only denied that there is a *dormant* essence of it. All that is inconceivable about this real essence, he regarded as an improper subject of affirmation or denial. He would not adopt, as the basis of his reasoning, nor would he allow his opponents to adopt, any proposition which is entirely beyond the reach of human thought. He took great pains to expose what he considered an assumption, that there is an inactive, dormant principle, taste, or propensity, back of all the exercises and faculties, of which we are conscious, as the ground, source, or cause of them all; and especially, that there is any thing sinful or holy in this principle. This, in his estimation, was attributing a property of matter to the mind, and making this material something the ground of all our spiritual exercises. Without denying that there is any thing in the mind of which we are not conscious, he was careful to have it understood, that *he* recognized nothing but what is *spirit*. Be it so, he seemed to say, that there is a substance to the soul, it is a spiritual, and not a material substance.

Whatever may be thought of the philosophy of Emmons, or the propriety of the phraseology which he has occasionally used on this subject, his own language itself—even that which is used in connection with the passages thought to indicate the opinion

Digitized by Google

in question, is sufficient to prove that he believed no such thing. When he speaks of perception, reason, memory, conscience, and volition, as properties of the soul, does not his language irresistibly imply, that there is a soul to perceive, to reason, to remember, to feel moral obligation, and to will either right or wrong? Can any one seriously think that such a man as Emmons, ever believed that perception is a possibility, without a soul to perceive? that there is or can be any such thing as reason or reasoning, without a soul possessing the faculty of reason, or carrying on the process? that there is such a thing as moral sensibility, without a soul actually discerning between good and evil? Is such a thing as memory conceivable, without a soul capable of recalling what it has previously seen, heard, or known? What is volition? what did Emmons believe the volition of man to be, but his soul, loving or hating, choosing or refusing? Those who, in view of all the facts in the case, can persuade themselves that Emmons denied the proper being of a soul, while he spake thus of its properties and acts, must either believe that he was destitute of common sense, or show that they themselves are wanting in this important instinct.

B. — He has been supposed to teach, not only the Fact that God does secure the Fulfilment of his Decrees, but also the Mode in which He secures their Fulfilment.

If a man believes that the Sovereign, who forms his purposes in eternity, does not so govern the universe in time as to secure the fulfilment of these purposes, that man may be a kind-hearted citizen and an obliging neighbor, but he is no Calvinist. Emmons had such an intense desire to represent the Providence of God as coextensive and coincident with the Decrees of God, that he overlooked all theories with regard to the *mode* of conducting this Providence. (See Orig. Ed. I. 80; IV. 344, 345, 371; V. 147, 565; VI. 54.) Here as elsewhere he struck at the ultimate fact, and would not notice the intervening methods. His critics have mistaken him, because they have not looked so far into the distance as he. They have been unmindful of his great aim to reach the practical truth, and to develop the end which God secures, and which lies beyond the means and the methods in which God secures it. Emmons would have saved his critics from several misapprehensions of his meaning, if, here and there, he had turned his eye away from the fact that God executes his decrees, to some truths with regard to the mode in which God executes them. But in his excessive desire to avoid all mention of this mode, he has incurred the charge of having attempted to explain it!

A duodecimo volume containing three hundred and eighty-eight pages, and entitled "A Review of Dr. Emmons's Theory of God's Agency on Mankind," was published at New York in 1821; and the most plausible accusation which it brings against Emmons, consists in repeating the old remark, that he has undertaken to describe the method in which God secures the fulfilment of his eternal purpose in regard to the commission of sin. The testimony of Dr. Ide on this oft repeated charge may be

Digitized by Google

sufficient to refute it. He writes in a letter to the author of this Memoir:

"It is remarkable that nearly all the opponents of Emmons in regard to the doctrine of divine efficiency, have founded their principal objections to him on the supposed fact, that he has actually assumed the province of determining in what *mode* God's agency performs its work. But they ought to know, and it is a little surprising that men of so much learning and acuteness as some of them have shown themselves to be, do not know, that he never attempted any such thing. Before the Dr.'s death, this charge was often preferred against him. He spoke of it frequently, and declared it to be utterly groundless. It was among his common sayings, that no man could see *how*, or explain the *mode*, in which God performs his operations. He believed that God's agency, or the exertion of his power, consisted in his volition. But how his volition brought the heavens and earth into existence, or gave being to the vast multitude of intelligences that are known as the work of his hands, or communicated motion and activity both to matter and mind, he pretended to know nothing. There are now numerous living witnesses to the truth, that he disavowed all knowledge of the *mode* of divine operation in any case. In a sermon published more than fifty years ago, and ever since before the eye of the world, Emmons writes: 'Who can conceive or explain *how* the Supreme Being exists of himself? or *how* he supports the universe? or *how* he fills all places and surveys all objects at one and the same time? But who except atheists and sceptics will presume to deny these truths, or venture to call them inconsistent or absurd? Why, then, should any suppose there is the least absurdity in men's working out their own salvation with fear and trembling, while God, at the same time, works in them, both to will and to do of his good pleasure? It is as easy to conceive of this, as to conceive of the divine existence, omnipresence, or universal providence. In all cases of this nature the *facts* are plain and intelligible, but the *manner* of their existence or production is truly mysterious. Our own existence is self-evident, but how we were formed is to us a profound mystery. Our constant dependence on the Deity for the continuation of our existence, is capable of strict demonstration; but how God upholds us every moment, we are utterly unable to explain. So our dependence on the Deity to work in us to will and to do, is equally demonstrable; but *how* God operates on our minds in our free and voluntary exercises, we are equally unable to comprehend.'" (Vol. II. p. 411.)

"Emmons did indeed think it of great importance to assert and maintain the government of God over all creatures. He not only believed that God controlled the hearts and actions of the wicked, as well as the righteous, but he felt it an imperative duty to vindicate this truth, with zeal and energy against those who hold to his mere permission of evil without any positive agency in its existence. In one discourse on this subject, his zeal seems to have acquired such a degree of intensity as to excite him to the use of language less guarded than usual, and which may have led the reader in some instances to suppose that he meant to designate the *mode* of divine agency. But a more careful consideration of the object which he had in view, will, it is believed, satisfy every candid mind that it was only the *reality* and not the *mode* of divine agency which he meant to assert. 'Many,' he says, 'are disposed to make a distinction here, and to ascribe only the good actions to a divine influence, while they ascribe their bad ones to the divine permission. But there appears to be no ground for this distinction in Scripture or reason. Men are no more capable of acting independently in one instance than another. If they need any kind or degree of divine agency in doing good, they need precisely the same kind in doing evil.'" (Vol. II. p. 441.)

Digitized by Google

That is, mere permission will not do in either case. God must exert a *real agency* in both, because in both are they equally dependent. God *sent* Joseph into Egypt; but if his brethren who sold him, had acted without the exertion of any efficient influence from God upon their minds, *they* only would have sent him there. God would have had nothing to do with the event. They would have acted independently in the case, contrary to the fact as recorded in the Scripture. The Doctor goes on to say, 'It is God that worketh in men both to will and to do, in all cases, without exception. He wrought equally in the minds of those who sold and those who bought Joseph. He wrought as effectually in the minds of Joseph's brethren when they sold him, as when they repented and besought his mercy. He not only prepared these persons to act, but made them act. He not only exhibited motives before their minds, but disposed their minds to comply with the motives exhibited. But there was no possible way in which he could dispose them to act right or wrong, but only by producing right or wrong volition in their hearts. And if he produced their bad as well as their good volitions, then his agency was concerned precisely in the same manner in their wrong, as in their right, actions.'—(Vol. II. p. 441.)

"This I consider Dr. Emmons's most unguarded expression on the subject of divine agency, and the one which has furnished the best apology which his opponents have, for the charge of an attempt to define the mode of God's agency upon the human mind. But if it is only observed here, that he leaves an assertion which he makes as true in *one* respect, to be understood as though it was true in *all* respects, all that he has said may be admitted without involving him in any error or inconsistency, except that of asserting a general for a particular fact. 'But there was no possible way in which he could dispose them to act right or wrong, only by producing right or wrong volitions in their hearts.' There is no error here. If all right or wrong consists primarily in the volitions of men's hearts, which is admitted by others besides Dr. Emmons, it is clear that no agency whatever can make them right or wrong only by producing volitions of this character in their hearts. And now comes the general assertion, which is true in the particular sense in which he intended it, but not perhaps in every sense, 'And if he produced their bad as well as good volitions, then his agency was exerted precisely in the same manner in their wrong as in their right actions.' The same manner *in this respect*. Their actions in *both* cases, right and wrong, were produced by producing volitions. But *how* the agency of God produces *volition*, whether good or evil, is yet *unexplained*, and the explanation *unattempted*. 'The same manner,' here, in which God changes the *conduct* or *actions* of men, was not designed to cover the manner or mode in which he changes their *volitions*. The assertion amounts to no more than this: When God changes the conduct of men, either for the better or worse, it must be by producing their sinful or holy volitions. But *how* God operates to change their volitions still remains an *inscrutable mystery*. You may say, if you please, he changes their volition by his own will, advice or volition to that effect. But still the question returns, *How* does the act of God willing this change, effect it? And it is as impossible to answer this question, as it is to tell *how* the will of God that the world should be created, actually brought it into existence.

"Dr. Emmons has no theory on this subject. He aims to assert just what the Scriptures teach respecting it in such passages as Exodus 7: 3, 4; Proverbs 16: 1, 9; 20: 24; 21: 1; Jeremiah 10: 23; Matthew 10: 23; Ephesians 1: 11; Philippians 2: 12, etc."

Digitized by Google

C. — He has been supposed to teach that the Soul has no Constitutional Tendencies which, being themselves devoid of Moral Character, are yet the Occasion of Moral Character.

Professors Fitch, Taylor, and Goodrich of Yale College, have borne the following testimony:

"Dr. Emmons, in our view, deserves to be ranked with the ablest theologians which our country has produced. His style is pure, concise, and remarkably perspicuous. His strict method brings all his thoughts into natural and beautiful order. His logical acumen in stating and defending positions and in deducing from them just and necessary consequences, equals, if it does not excel, even that of the astute metaphysician, Dr. Clarke. His sermons form a rich treasure of thought and instruction to the theologian, and a model for clearness and acumen to the preacher. To his clear statements, the theology of the present day is much beholden for its consistent views on the subject of human obligation and the moral government of God, and their connection with the doctrines of grace. The controversy between him and Dr. Burton, enabled him to place most triumphantly all morality and obligation within the sphere of voluntary action (or exercise), in distinction from constitutional tendencies (or taste), and *had he, while denying the morality of those tendencies, but admitted their existence in order to account for the certainty of voluntary action, instead of referring it all to immediate divine efficiency, he would have taken every weapon out of the hands of his antagonist, and have avoided the principal error, which in our view, lies on the fair face of his theology, or hinders its success.*"

The acute metaphysicians who have thus criticized Emmons, would probably be sustained by the larger part of his readers. That the criticism however, is not warranted, in all respects, may be seen in the ensuing quotations from his Works:

"That religious *instinct*, if I may so call it, which is *inherent* in human *nature*, *constrains* every person to revere the sacred character of a holy and faithful minister." (Orig. Ed. I. 339.) — "Reason, conscience, and natural affections are no *principles of* action, but only *motives to* action. It is acknowledged, that they often operate as motives which influence the heart, the only proper principle of action." [The heart or choice is the only moral *principle* which does, or can exist.] — "If natural affection dictate to a man to give to a beloved child the largest portion of his inheritance, his natural affection is not the *principle* of action, but his heart, which acts *agreeably* to his natural affection." (Works, II. 641, 642.) — "There is nothing morally good or evil in hunger, thirst, or any natural taste." (Works, III. 119). — "All his (Adam's) natural powers, instincts, and appetites, must have remained as innocent, *after* he lost his holiness, as *before* he lost it." (Works, II. 697.) — "Profane swearing is the most *unnatural* sin in this wicked world. It does not originate from any *natural propensity, instinct, or appetite* in the human mind, but is contrary to every dictate of reason and conscience. . . . . There *are* many vices to which mankind are *naturally prone*, because they gratify some of their *natural inclinations;* and we can easily account for their *running* into these without being *led.*" (Orig. Ed. II. 468.) — "A natural fear or a fear of natural evil or danger, is *passive and innocent.*" (Orig. Ed. VII. 439.)

Digitized by Google

Dr. Ide writes: "The reason, conscience, and intellectual powers of man, Emmons considered as belonging to man's moral nature; as indicating and enforcing moral obligation, but not as having in themselves any thing truly good or evil. The corporeal appetites connected with the soul in its tabernacle of clay, such as hunger and thirst, and sexual propensities, and other instincts more appropriately its own, as a sense of right and wrong, the fear of injury, the love of happiness and hatred of misery, he considered as important realities, which were often the occasion of good and evil,—motives to sin and holiness, whose power and influence among men were universally felt. But these appetites, instincts, and passions, he considered as neither sinful nor holy, so far as unattended or uncontrolled by voluntary selfishness or benevolence."

D.—He has been supposed to undervalue the Kindly Spirit of Theological Science.

He has been represented as picturing forth the Divine Mind in the aspect of an immense and infinite intellect, existing in one comprehensive and unbending decree, and feeling none of the genial affections so lovely in a human father. But the aim of this many-sided man was, to refute the dogma of God's immobility, to portray the infinite Parent as overflowing with affections in *kind* like those of a finite friend or brother or mother even; but in *degree* infinitely more exuberant, and in *character* infinitely more amiable. He represents God as "*pleased*" and "*delighted*," as experiencing "*joy*" and "*pity*" and "*zeal*;" and he sanctions the remark of Hume that "a mind whose acts and sentiments and ideas are not *distinct* and *successive*, one that is wholly simple and totally immutable, is a mind which has no thought, no reason, no will, no sentiment, no love, no hatred; or, in a word, is no mind at all." (Works, II. 245.)—He even goes so far as to affirm, in his Sermon on the Blessedness of God: It implies no absurdity to suppose that his blessedness will be much *greater* at the end, than at the beginning of the world. "We must suppose that God views things as they *are*, and not as they are *not*. He views things which do *not* exist, *as* not existing; and things which *do* exist, *as* actually existing." When, therefore, all the results of his infinite benevolence shall be *realities* actually in being, instead of *possibilities* not yet realized in present fact, "where is the absurdity of supposing that the happiness of the Deity will rise higher" than it has now risen? "And where is the absurdity of supposing that his blessedness should perpetually rise higher and higher, as the successive scenes of eternity are perpetually opening, and displaying new effects of his benevolence?" Many remarks similar to the preceding, whether they be accurate or not, disclose the aim of Emmons to represent the nature of God as genial, affectionate, warm, rejoicing like a bridegroom, pitying like a mother in her fondness for the infant of her womb. "God loves and hates with all his heart, and with all his mind,



Digitized by Google

and with all his strength." When God afflicts men, he instructs them "in the way most *self-denying* to *himself*, as well as to them." (See also, pp. 381–384, 393 of this Memoir).

E.—His Calvinism has been regarded as too High, and likewise as too Low.

*a. His Critics overlook the fact, that he aimed to teach a Positive Calvinism.*

One characteristic of Emmons, which exerted a perceptible influence over his system, and received a reciprocal influence from it, was decision; a preference of the positive attitude above the negative. His whole deportment, even in the common interchange of civilities, showed his definiteness and fixedness of mind. Being asked his opinion respecting a certain quaternion of theologians, he summed it up in the following words: "The first is Calvinisticalish; the second, Calvinistical; the third, Calvinistic; the fourth, a Calvinist. For my own part, I wish to be either something or nothing, in theology. I hate to be something-ish." "*I am a Calvinist*," was a phrase which he often uttered. His mind was *made up* on theological questions; and his answers were never a little more positive than negative, and considerably more negative than positive; somewhat more of yes than no, and rather more of no than yes. His communication was, Yea, yea, nay, nay. His theological tenets were like his treatment of them, positive in their character. He could never tolerate the statement that sin is a mere want of holiness; he insisted that a mere want is a mere nothing, and sin is something. "It has been said," he remarks, "that cold is the absence of heat. It might as well be said that heat is the absence of cold." So he could never tolerate the statement that the first cause of sin is a mere *want* of Divine Efficiency: ex nihilo nihil fit. The simple absence of a decree of election does not constitute a decree of reprobation.

Whether in religious or civil concernments, a positive attitude will be more commanding than any other. Hence this attitude was uniformly adopted from motives of policy by Napoleon, who perhaps understood, better than any other modern, how to manage masses of men. The multitude will never follow a leader who is not bold and unwavering. A system of negations will never enlist the sympathies of the people. It was the *nature* of Emmons to take positive ground; and had he possessed a different nature, his sagacity might have led him to take the same. He knew that a people would never respect their minister, if he sailed round and round Point No-Point; he must sail for a definite port, and know whither he is bound, and steer directly *by* the rocks and the quicksands, and not ask the advice of his cabin passengers, nor beg his sailors to pardon him for venturing to have a mind of his own.

Digitized by Google

*b. His Critics overlook the fact, that he aimed to make the Essence of Calvinism prominent and conspicuous.*

Many Calvinists do admit that there is a negative sin, but the essence of Calvinism, as a complete system, is more clearly unfolded by the truth, that all sin is positive. Emmons exhibits the true spirit of the Genevan faith, by the prominence which he gives to the sovereign plan of the Most High, and to the efficiency which executes this plan. He did not mean to represent the doctrine of divine decrees as equivalent to the doctrine of Atoning Love, but he did mean to represent it as the distinctive mark of the creed whose aim it is to exalt Jehovah. It is by the conspicuous position of Jehovah's electing love, and not by the article of Justification by Faith, that the Calvinistic, is distinguished from the Lutheran, and every other Evangelical system. Soberly aiming to maintain the genius of the Reformed Creed, he did not amuse men by declaiming on its "conservative tendencies," on its "high monarchism," on its lofty "conceptions of government," on its "spirit of royalty." He saw through that kind of Calvinism, which consists in sparkling words about "the glory of the Institutes," and in *not preaching on the doctrine of election.* He fully comprehended that class of Calvinists who uttered high-sounding phrases about "the high truths of the Catechism," and then *carefully abstained in their sermons from unfolding the Sovereignty of Jehovah.* There were men in his day, who would rather use the doctrine of Predestination as a glittering sword to be brandished on the parade ground, than as a sober truth to be soberly explained, and proved and applied in the pulpit. He believed it to be one thing to make an ostentatious display of zeal for "high doctrine," but quite a different thing to make a pungent application of the doctrine of decrees to the hearts of men who love to hear *about* "high doctrine," more than they love to have it pressed home upon their consciences.

Emmons has borne reproach from professed Calvinists for his fidelity to the creed which they pretend to adopt. This is illustrated in his doctrine of the Divine Agency concerning Sin. Dr. Ide writes:

"Emmons believed that, in view of all its results, as overruled by the Divine providence and grace, God *willed* the existence of sin. He considered the agency of God as primarily consisting entirely in his volition. By this, not only are all the means of fulfilling his purposes arranged, but the energy imparted which is essential to their success. In his will, choice, or volition that moral evil should exist, Emmons admitted that there is no approval of its nature. Sin is, in its own nature, the abominable thing which God's soul hates. In all its forms and degrees he views it, as it is in itself, or in its own nature, with perfect abhorrence. And its effects, except so far as overruled by his wise providence, are just like itself, infinitely hateful and ruinous. But in his foresight of all the possible occasions of promoting his own glory, and securing the

Digitized by Google

highest good of the universe, he saw that light could be brought out of darkness and good out of evil, or in other words, that the existence of sin might be so overruled as indirectly to promote the good which it is suited to destroy. Though in its own nature tending to dishonor God, and ruin the work of his hands, it might under the counteracting, overruling, mysterious working of his providence and grace become instrumental of glorifying his name, displaying his perfections, and promoting the good of his creatures in a higher degree, than even holiness alone could do. The unnatural and wicked conspiracy of Jacob's sons against their brother Joseph, in consequence of which he was sold as a slave into Egypt, was an act which God abhorred. But the sacred writers assure us, that his agency was concerned in this very thing. In reference to this event, Joseph says to his brethren: '*Now be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life — so now it was not you that sent me hither, but God; and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh and Lord of all his house and a ruler throughout the land of Egypt.*' — (Gen. 45: 5, 7, 8.) If God did not design that Joseph's brethren should conspire against him as they did, and sell him to be carried as a slave into Egypt, in what sense did God *send* him there? The least that can be made of God's agency in this transaction, is, that in view of the important results which he could secure by counteracting its tendency and overruling it for good, he *willed* it. If we deny that God willed, chose, or designed that the sons of Jacob should do as they did in respect to their brother Joseph, we cannot name any proper sense in which God *sent* him into Egypt. Explain the subject as we may, when we have proved that God *did not choose* that Joseph should go into Egypt under the influences and instrumentalities which led him there, we have proved that God did not *send* him. Emmons's view of God's agency in this sin, is that he *willed* its existence, not on account of any thing which he approved in its nature, but that he might so overrule it as to bring good out of the evil. That Joseph's brethren were voluntary, free, and accountable in all they did, is proved, not only by the strong testimony of their own consciences, and the frank acknowledgment of their guilt, but by the censure which the word of God passes upon them. They were *the responsible actors* in this case. Though God disposed them to act, yet he did not act for them. It was they, and not God, that envied and hated Joseph. It was they, and not God, that sold him into bondage. It was their feelings and not his, that approved of this wicked transaction. They meant it for evil, but he meant it for good. If the actor, that devises, approves, and perpetuates an evil deed, is the proper and responsible *author* of that deed, then Joseph's brethren were the *authors* — the *only* proper and responsible *authors* of the sin committed against their brother. The agency of God was not of a kind which involved an approval of the transaction. Nor was he, in the plain common sense usage of the term, *the author of the act.* As dependent creatures, they *needed* his agency to *enable* them to act. No man *is*, or *can be made, able* to act independently of God. The agency which God exerted upon Joseph's brethren in the commission of the evil deed to which allusion is here made, was just that agency which was *necessary* to *enable* them as *creatures* to act — to act *freely* — to act accountably, and to do that which God, although he hated its nature, and viewed with indignation their motives, still chose should be done for the sake of great and important results, which his infinite wisdom and goodness would overrule it to accomplish. This is the agency which Emmons believed God exerted upon other wicked men, as well as upon the brethren of Joseph.

"The crucifixion of Christ was perhaps the greatest sin that was ever committed by creatures. The displeasure with which God viewed this sin in its own nature, was in exact proportion to the love which he bore to his beloved Son. And the hatred which

Digitized by Google

he felt toward the consequences which the nature of this wicked transaction had a tendency to produce, was the same which he felt at the most determined hostility to the great interests of his kingdom. But as overruled by him, it has been, and he from the beginning determined it should be, the salvation of the world. 'Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.' (Acts 2: 23.) 'For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.' (Acts 4: 27, 28.) But to deny that God exerted an agency in the crucifixion of Christ, and in all the conduct of his betrayers and murderers, is virtually to contradict the inspired declarations of the prophet: 'It hath pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief.' (Isaiah 53: 10, 6.) 'The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;' and also to deny all which is said of God's giving his Son to die for sinners, and of his having given himself for the life of the world. We might as well dispute the purpose and agency of God with respect to any event that has ever taken place beneath the heavens, as to deny these respecting the sufferings and death of Christ by the hand of his enemies. To say that God had no choice, in reference to that display of his glory which this event, under his overruling providence, would occasion, and to that great salvation which without it must have been impossible to lost men, is to contradict the serious convictions of three quarters of the Christian world. But God's choice or volition that the Jews should, in the exercise of the appropriate powers of free moral agents, crucify the Son of God with wicked hands, is the agency which Emmons supposed that he exerted in this transaction."

"It is truly mortifying to hear divines charge Emmons with blasphemy on account of his teaching, as do the Scriptures, that God exerts an agency over the hearts of the righteous and the wicked, and at the same time condemn him for differing in some respects from John Calvin, just as if it were not true that the most *distinguishing* feature in Calvin's theology is the doctrine of the divine purpose and agency in respect to both moral good and evil. There are divines who condemn him for his disagreement with Calvin, when there is more of genuine Calvinism in one of his sermons, than these divines ever taught or ever believed in their whole life. It would be amusing, were it not a subject on which merriment seems out of place, to hear grave theologians mourning over Emmons's doubts respecting the infallibility of the Assembly's Catechism, and severely censuring his dangerous doctrine, that God's agency is concerned in the conduct, both of the righteous and the wicked, while the sacred instrument which they deem so nearly infallible as to make it almost sacrilege to suspect it of error, actually declares that 'the decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby for his own glory he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass,' and that his 'works of providence are his most holy, wise and powerful, preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions.'"

The essence of the Genevan faith consists, not only in presenting such views of God as will awaken supreme adoration, but also in presenting such views of men as will awaken remorse and self-abhorrence. The design and scope of Emmonism is to show, that "sinners hate God more than they hate any other, yea, more than all other beings. They are his most incorrigible and irreconcilable enemies. They have done nothing



Digitized by Google

but sin every day since they were born; and nothing prevents God from executing the penalty of his holy law upon them but his mere sovereign, unpromised mercy; — this is the plain, simple truth with respect to every sinner. And this plain, simple truth is more alarming and tremendous to an awakened sinner, than all the thunderings and lightnings which attended the giving of the law at Mount Sinai." By such words did the Franklin Calvinist aim to excite a spirit of *self-loathing*. He had no time, therefore, for entertaining his hearers with a theory of their having committed a sin in Paradise. They rose in rebellion when he announced that they would, if they could, dethrone God; but they would have loved to hear him declaim on their having really and actually eaten the apple six thousand years ago. He believed it to be one thing to press on men the charge that they themselves are now, of their own choice, ready to crucify their Lord afresh; and a very different thing to utter mystical words on their generic participation in the crime committed in the heart of Asia, before the birth of Cain. He saw peril in all such terms as charm man with a notion of his mystical ill-desert, and thus allure him away from the accusation of his ill-desert in the plain, prosaic sense of that word. When *sin* is mentioned, it is soothing to lose one's self in imaginative theories. If Emmons had taken delight in this fashionable Calvinism, he might have astonished his auditors with his sesquipedalian nomenclature, and earned a shining name for his polished orthodoxy, but he chose to tell men, in a homely way, that they in their own persons have committed all the sin which they are guilty of, have committed their sin because and only because they chose to do so, have committed it whenever they could, and they mean now to commit it whenever they can, and they do not repent only because they are unwilling to repent, and they are in danger of not being saved, only because they prefer to sin and to be lost.

*c. His Critics overlook the fact, that he aimed to exhibit a Consistent Calvinism.*

His theories on the freedom of the will, on the nature of virtue, on the voluntariness of all character, on the atonement, etc., were *designed* to prepare the way for preaching those truths which distinguished Calvin from Arminius. He conducted many a controversy with what he termed Semi-Calvinists, the "Moderate Calvinists, which is but another name for moderate Arminians." They professed a faith in the Catechism; this formed one half of their theological influence. They refused to preach its most distinctive doctrines; this formed the other half of their influence, and gave it a semitone. They believed in the absolute Sovereignty of God. This was one half of their record. But they said

Digitized by Google

nothing of the doctrine in the pulpit; this was the other half. They silently admitted the divine purposes; thus far all was well. They really denied the divine efficiency in executing all these purposes: thus far all was ill. To accept the purposes is Calvinistic; to disown the efficiency that gives to these purposes all their meaning, is Anti-Calvinistic. The same men proclaimed in general terms the doctrine of Total Depravity; this was one part of their creed. They averred in specific language, that all the choices of men are not positively sinful; this formed the other part of their creed, and made it semi-compact. To avow a belief in Total Depravity is popular. To avow a belief that all the choices of men are not positively sinful is popular. To remain Orthodox, and yet to assure the unregenerate, that their preferences are not entirely wrong, *must* be popular. "It has been much disputed of late, among those *who call themselves* Calvinists," says the unfashionable divine, "whether all the doings of unregenerate men are altogether sinful." . . . . "There are many who acknowledge that the hearts of sinners are totally depraved and yet deny that their actions are altogether criminal." But he adds, "Either *all* the actions of sinners are totally corrupt, or *none* of them are so."

*d. His Critics overlook the fact, that he was an Independent Calvinist.*

"I am General Washington's man;" "I am President Madison's man;" — Emmons commiserated the African who was wont to proclaim his slavery by such words. In forming his creed Emmons was nobody's man. "He was himself," says Dr. Ide, "in every respect, and nobody else." He is, therefore, an *independent* witness for the Genevan faith. His testimony in its behalf is the more important, as, during his earlier years, his moral feelings rose in strong antagonism to it. He was not a Calvinist by nature. Through strict discipline, however, he became in some particulars, a more faithful representative of Essential, as distinct from Fashionable; of Consistent, as distinct from one-sided Calvinism, than has appeared in our land for a hundred years. (See pp. 309–311.) It is true that he did not wear a gold ring, but he was a Calvinist for all that. He did not burn with ambition for place or power, but he was a Calvinist for all that. He was neither morose nor envious, but he was a Calvinist for all that. He did not engage in wily manœuvres; but he was a Calvinist for all that. He did not slander his opponents; but he was a Calvinist for all that. He allowed some phrases which his brethren disowned; but he was an essential Calvinist for all that. He disowned some phrases which his brethren allowed; but he was a consistent Calvinist for all that. Dr. Ware of Cambridge said, that

Digitized by Google

Emmons "is one of the ablest, and clearest and most consistent writers, that has appeared on the side of Orthodoxy." He did maintain the Free Will of man; he did so, partly in order that he might maintain the Predestinating act of God. He did affirm that all sin is a free choice; he did so, partly in order that he might affirm the justice of God in punishing forever so needless an offence.

Emmons has illustrated the type of his independent as well as "Consistent Calvinism," in his article written for Miss Hannah Adams's History of all Religions, on the Hopkinsian Theology, and also in the following record which he wrote near the close of his life.

"I have endeavored to show,

"1. That holiness and sin consist in free voluntary affections or exercises.

"2. That men can act freely under the divine agency.

"3. That the least transgression of the divine law deserves eternal punishment.

"4. That right and wrong are founded in the nature of things.

"5. That the posterity of Adam are guilty of no sin but their own free, voluntary, selfish affections.

"6. That God exercises mere grace in pardoning or justifying penitent believers through the atonement of Christ, and mere *goodness* in rewarding them for their good works.

"7. That the hearts of sinners are, by nature, totally depraved.

"8. That God has a right, notwithstanding their total depravity, to require them to turn from sin to holiness.

"9. That preachers of the gospel ought to exhort sinners to love God, repent of sin, and believe in Christ immediately.

"10. That sinners do not perform one holy and acceptable act, until they exercise pure, disinterested love.

"11. That sinners must exercise unconditional submission to God, before they can exercise saving faith in Christ.

"12. That men are active and not passive in regeneration.

"These are doctrines which I have preached in the general course of my ministry, some of which I have endeavored to set in a clearer light than I have ever seen done by any others."

This summary is of great historical importance; for it illustrates the inaccuracy, not to say the inveracity, of representing Emmonism as distinguished from the popular Calvinism, merely by the theories that God is the First Cause of sin, and that sinners should submit to the justice of a condemning God, or, as his maligners express themselves, "should be willing to be damned." The same inaccuracy is illustrated by another statement which Dr. Emmons has made, concerning the type

Digitized by Google

of his theology, and in which he has condemned what Professor Woods of Andover was accustomed to call the "fag-ends of Calvinism." He writes:

In my discourses "I had no intention of starting any new scheme of divinity; for I was early and warmly attached to genuine Calvinism, which I believed to be built upon the firm foundation of the gospel itself. This system, I have thought, and still think, is the very form of sound words, which the apostles and their successors taught, long before Calvin was born; and which has been constantly maintained by those who have been justly called *Orthodox*, in distinction from *Heterodox* Christians, ever since the first propagation of the Christian religion. But Calvinism has lost much of its purity and simplicity, by going through so many unskilful hands of its friends. This has given great advantages to its enemies, who have clearly discovered and successfully attacked some of its excrescences and protuberances. The Calvinists and Arminians are more directly and diametrically opposed to each other, than any other denominations of Christians; and after many skirmishes together, they had long ago one great pitched battle, in which they concentrated their mutual attacks to a few cardinal points. These Dr. *Price* enumerates and reprobates in the following order and strongest terms.

"'First, The doctrine of absolute predestination and election.

"'Secondly, The doctrine of original sin.

"'Thirdly, The doctrine of the total impotence of man, and irresistible grace, in opposition to free will.

"'Fourthly, The doctrine of particular, in opposition to universal redemption.

"'Fifthly, The doctrine of the perseverance of saints, after being once called and converted.

"'These five doctrines have been called, by way of distinction and eminence, the Five Points. They are the points about which the sect called Arminians, differ from Calvinists. But there is one other point connected with those now specified, which forms an essential part of this system, and which, in justice to it, ought to be mentioned. That is the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and the imputed righteousness of Christ. All the orthodox confessions of faith agree in declaring that we are accounted righteous before God, not for our good works, but only for the merit of Christ. In truth, were any man (supposed unacquainted with the controversies which have arisen among Christians) to set himself to invent a system of faith so irrational and unscriptural as to be incapable of being received by Christians, he could scarcely think of one concerning which he would be more ready to form such a judgment.'

"It is not a little strange that Dr. Price should venture to speak so reproachfully of Calvinism, when he knew that some of the greatest

Digitized by Google

divines and metaphysicians in Europe had employed their profound learning and reasoning powers to maintain it; while others of equal learning and genius had labored in vain to overthrow it. The truth is, Calvinists have so ably and perseveringly supported their system of sentiments, that they have been, and still are, universally called the orthodox, in distinction from all other denominations of Christians. This can be accounted for, only on the supposition that their scheme of doctrines stands upon a firm and immutable foundation. I know that some Calvinists maintain that the first sin of Adam is imputed to his posterity; that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to believers for their justification; that sinners are under natural inability to turn from sin to holiness; and that Christ made atonement for the elect only. I grant, these are gross absurdities, or mere wens and protuberances, which must be pared off from true Calvinism, in order to make it appear consistent with both reason and Scripture. Accordingly, modern Calvinists readily surrender their formerly untenable outposts, and now find it more easy to defend their citadel against all attacks of their most numerous adversaries."—*Memoir of himself.*

Digitized by Google

# CHAPTER XVII.

## THE NEW ERA IN HIS LIFE.

THE prolonged old age of Emmons, formed a distinct life in itself. His last quarter of a century on earth furnishes the material for a new Memoir, and may be divided into the following sections.

### § 1. *His Later Afflictions.*

His life was clouded over with troubles near the time of its commencement. It soon brightened up, and remained cheerful and sunny for more than thirty-three years. Then it was darkened by a series of bereavements. We left the studious pastor, surrounded with his second wife and four sprightly daughters and two enterprising sons. He was pursuing his course of cheerful study, and for the period of one entire generation, was uninterrupted by any serious illness or misfortune, either in himself or his joyful household. He writes, however, "But my days of prosperity were followed by days of adversity. In the year 1813, I buried my second daughter, Deliverance." A sister of Delia has given the ensuing narrative of her last days.

"In the sickness and death of this beloved daughter, my father was deeply affected. She had reached mature years without having given her heart to the Saviour. We never felt that our father had any favorites among his children, but that we all shared alike his paternal care and affection. Still it was evident that in his opinion this daughter partook very largely of his peculiar traits of character. He used sometimes to say, pleasantly, 'She is the only child I have that has the misfortune to resemble me.' But to those who knew her best, it was evident that this resemblance was not in person or feature, but in the cast of her mind. She was distinguished for her wit, vivacity, and discrimination. In the exercise of her social powers she was the delight not only of her youthful associates, but of her friends of every age. Her sickness was a scrofula consumption, long and distressing, continuing more than three years and a half. In the summer of each successive year her symptoms were less violent and would invite the hope of her restoration. But the return of winter would again confine her to her room, and nip those hopes which were so fondly cherished.



Digitized by Google

"All this while, my father 'at the dreadful post of observation,' was, in his own way, endeavoring to lead her to the Saviour. He conversed with and prayed for her. He put such books into her hands as he thought best suited to bring her mind to a decision. In the early part of the time he uniformly conversed with her alone, that she might disclose her feelings without embarrassment. During the latter part of her sickness the members of the family were present, and other Christian friends visiting us were invited to converse with her upon the subject of her spiritual state. For some time previous to her death the enmity of her heart appeared to be slain; but light had not broken into her mind with sufficient clearness to allow her to indulge a hope of her acceptance with Christ. Never will a remark be forgotten made by her to an affectionate sister, who communicated to her her own change of views and hope in the Saviour: 'How is it that I rejoice that you are taken while I am left? But I do.' She well knew that such joy in the sovereignty of God was not the feeling of the natural heart, yet she felt that she could indulge no such hope herself. 'If I were a Christian,' she would say, 'I should feel more deeply my sins. I know I am a sinner, but do not feel it.' Shortly after this, the Saviour was pleased to manifest himself to her in a most delightful manner. Her views seemed clear and rapturous. When questioned by her father with regard to these exercises, and asked why she might not now be deceived, as Satan could transform himself into an angel of light; she promptly replied, 'Because I think my views and feelings are perfectly scriptural.' Ever after this, her mind remained in the most delightful and tranquil state. For several days the lamp of life burned dimly, and we were in constant expectation of her departure.

"When we were called in the night to enter her dying room, her countenance was lighted with a smile, and she continued to converse with her brothers and sisters in the most affectionate and interesting manner. Her parents stood with us around her dying bed. Their calmness and composure were manifest in this hour of trial; and as the sun was rising upon this dark world, her spirit fled as we trust to the abodes of light and glory. During the whole of this period my father was calm and collected; yet it was evident he felt it most deeply. When questioned with respect to this bereavement, in comparison with that he suffered in the removal of his two other children, he replied, 'There is a different train of reflections. In the death of an adult child, the *loss* is more deeply felt, but in the death of little children, the tender feelings are more powerfully called into exercise.' One of the means made use of to keep himself from being overcome in this day of trial was, that he followed in contemplation the departed spirit. This may be inferred from the advice given to one of his children who was at this time disposed to linger around 'the beautiful clay,' and continue by its side: 'Beware, beware,' he said, 'of nursing your grief at the body; follow the soul, and you never need fear being overcome.' This was found to be of great practical importance to the one to whom it was addressed. That my dear father was most deeply affected by this dispensation was evident from the fact, that when alone in his room, he was often heard to repeat the lines which he afterwards placed upon her gravestone. They are, with slight alterations, taken from Henry Kirke White."

The epitaph here alluded to is thus written:

In Memory of Miss Deliverance Emmons, who departed this life June 3d, 1813, Ætatis 30.

"When o'er thy dawn the darkness spread,
And deeper every moment grew;
When rudely round thy painful head
The chilling blasts of sickness blew;

Digitized by Google

"Religion heard no plainings loud;
The sigh in silence stole from thee;
Thy dearest friends around thee crowd,
With hearts of deepest sympathy."

"This marble marks thy bed of mortal sleep,
And living statues here are seen to weep;
Affliction's semblance bends not o'er thy tomb,
Affliction's self deplores thy early doom."

"In the year 1820, I buried my son Erastus," is the concise announcement of Emmons in his Autobiography. The long line of gravestones belonging to his household presents the following epitaph:

In Memory of Major Erastus Emmons, who departed this life March 13, 1820, aged 32.

Consult life's silent clock; thy bounding vein,—
Seems it to say, health here has long to reign?
Yet fear, youth ofttimes healthful and at ease,
Anticipates a day it never sees,
And many a tomb, like this of mine, aloud
Exclaims, Prepare thee for an early shroud.

Dr. Ide writes concerning Major Emmons:

'He possessed a noble disposition, great buoyancy of spirit, and a talent for doing business with order, neatness, and despatch. He had repeated offers of lucrative employment in mercantile life, but from a regard to the feelings of his aged parents, he was induced to decline these offers, and to remain under the paternal roof. If there was any arm of flesh on which Dr. Emmons now leaned, it was the disposition and ability of this beloved son to render his last days comfortable and happy. But while on Boston Common, in the discharge of his duty as aid to Major-General Crane, on a cold autumnal day, Erastus received a heavy chill which fastened disease upon his lungs. From the first of this attack, Death seemed to mark him as his victim; and, with one short interval of relief and encouragement, his course was onward with rapid strides, to the grave.

'His father now distinctly saw the heavy calamity that was before him. Erastus, the dear object of his affections had given him no evidence of a preparation for death. The thought of his son's leaving the world without a good hope of salvation, filled him with the deepest solicitude. By his counsel and his prayers, he endeavored to lead the invalid to a saving knowledge of Christ. For some time Major Emmons endured great anxiety in view of his situation; but at length, as it was hoped, submitted himself to God. For a number of weeks previous to his death, he enjoyed great consolation; and gave as much evidence of a change of heart as could be expected from one converted upon a dying bed. By his appearance near the close of life, the anxiety of his father respecting him was greatly relieved. Though always distrustful of the saving nature of a change which takes place just as the day of probation is expiring, yet it was evident, from an expression which he dropped in the ear of his dying son, that he cherished a hope of the son's salvation. Just before Erastus left the world he looked up and said, "Father, I am dying." His father then inquired, "Do your trust and confidence in God remain unshaken?" Erastus



Digitized by Google

replied in the affirmative. Then said his father, "Your passage is short, and, if you are not deceived, your rest in heaven will be glorious." The son expired. Shortly after the closing scene, the father, in the room where lay the remains of the strong man who had been the hope of his old age, offered a prayer apparently full of submission and trust in God. So perfect was his composure, that once only was his utterance choked by the depth of his emotions. There is no mystery in the extraordinary support and consolation which he then enjoyed; for it has since been ascertained that a number of his church, anticipating the fearful result of his son's sickness, had met weekly to unite their prayers that he might be sustained under the approaching calamity.'

On the Sabbath after a funeral, the faithful pastor had been in the habit of delivering an appropriate sermon; and when there was no reason for believing that the change of worlds had been a happy one, he would preach a judicious but still an *appropriate sermon*, for he moved on a straight line. He did not expressly announce, that there was no hope for the departed, but he spoke with the uncertainty which candor required; and his subject was an alarming admonition to the living, not to leave it doubtful whether they were to be saved or lost. He had often preached on the deceptiveness of a death-bed repentance, and now, in the case of the favorite son, what shall he say? Shall he preach a funeral discourse? Shall he be candid in his allusions to the deceased? Shall he be submissive in the hour when others mourn, and insubmissive in the hour of his own grief? With sublimer disinterestedness than that of a Roman father, he closed his sermon on the Sabbath after the burial of his son, with these characteristic words:

"This subject, and the late instance of mortality in this place, call aloud upon those in the midst of their days, to prepare to follow one of their own age into that vast eternity, whither he has gone and never to return. He lived stupid, thoughtless and secure in sin, until he was brought to the very sight of death. He was carried away with the vanity of the world, and the pleasing prospects of living; and abused the calls, the mercies, and patience of God; which gave him pain, self-condemnation and remorse. He was constrained to say, 'The world, the world has ruined me.' He was brought to give up all his vain hopes and expectations from the world, and to feel the duty and importance of choosing the one thing needful. But whether he did ever heartily renounce the world and choose God for his supreme portion, cannot be known in this world. In his own view, he did become reconciled to God, and derived peace and hope from his supposed reconciliation. But it is more than possible, that like others on a sick-bed, he built his hopes upon a sandy foundation. Let his case, however, be what it may, he is dead, and called away from his relatives and friends, just as he entered the meridian of life. His death, therefore, speaks with an emphasis to parents, brothers and sisters; and especially to those of his own age, to be wiser and better than he was; and not to delay seeking and serving God, to a dying hour. It is not I, but my son, who now preaches to you, whose voice once sounded pleasant in your ears. Be pleased, therefore, to hear his voice from the dead; and prepare to follow him to heaven, if he has been permitted to enter there."

A few weeks afterwards, when called to baptize a child who was to bear the name of this lamented son, the bereaved man lifted up his hand, spoke the word Erastus,—and could proceed no further; thus evincing that his Christian and parental fidelity was not stoicism. It was his development in practical life of the disinterestedness which characterized his theory. He was a man of philosophical practice, and of practical philosophy.

Digitized by Google

"In 1823, I buried my third daughter, Sarah," is another brief sentence in Emmons's Autobiography. In the significant row of his family gravestones is her epitaph:

In Memory of Miss SARAH EMMONS, who died Jan. 3d, 1823, aged 37 years.

"By nature's law, what may be, may be *now*;
There's no prerogative in human hours:
In human hearts, what bolder thoughts can rise,
Than man's presumption on to-morrow's dawn!
Where is to-morrow? In another world."

This daughter was remarkable for her liveliness and good cheer. Her father delighted in her as a model of punctuality and of skill in the affairs of his household. She was admired for her amiable spirit, and her devotion to the welfare of her parents. The circumstances of her departure have been thus narrated:

"When Delia died," says her brother-in-law, "the bereaved father had five children left, and four of them were in his own family. When Erastus died, two of his daughters had been married, and although the staff on which he leaned was taken away, he still had one child in his house whose presence prevented, in some degree, his sense of loneliness, and whose filial regard and attentions greatly alleviated the pains of his bereavement. But when Sarah died, he and his feeble companion were left alone, without a child at home to participate in their grief, or to lighten the burden of their cares."

In a letter to a relative, Dr. Emmons wrote:

"I believe that she had but very little expectation of living for more than six months before she died. All that time her mind was seriously impressed; but she did not entertain a hope of having right views and feelings till about two months before she left the world. Ever after she first found light, she continued to enjoy it, which gave her great peace and tranquillity of mind as long as she lived. She conversed very freely about the state of her mind, and of her prospects beyond the grave. She seemed to regret leaving the world, principally on account of her aged parents. But the wise and holy Disposer of all things has been disposed to deny the gratification of her desires and ours. She is gone, and we are left to lament her loss."

On the Sabbath after her funeral, the submissive patriarch, then in his seventy-eighth year, preached a sermon from the text: "And Aaron held his peace." "Though Aaron held his peace, and refrained from *speaking*, yet," said the old patriarch, "he did not refrain from *thinking*." The sermon closes with these characteristic words:

The speaker "has been a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. God has bereaved him of father and mother, of brothers and sisters, of one nearer and dearer than either, of several young, tender, fair branches of his family, and of all his contemporary brethren in the work of the ministry. God has called him to bear the yoke in his youth, in his riper years, and now even under the infirmities of old age. He has poured out to him another cup of the wormwood and the gall, while the bitterness of the former cups is still in remembrance. God has recently and prematurely bereaved him of a dear daughter, upon whom it was natural to place some hopes and

Digitized by Google

some dependence; but those hopes and that dependence are now buried with her in the grave. He may now with more propriety, and he hopes with a better spirit, say as Jacob said, I will go down into the grave unto my daughter, mourning. He may be allowed to mourn but not to murmur. He knows it becomes him to hold his peace, and not open his mouth, because the Lord has done it. But you will permit me to make the same request that Job made on a similar occasion: 'Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.'"

"Never shall we forget," writes one of his parishioners, "the manner in which he uttered those last words. Our youthful eyes beheld him, then in the seventy-eighth year of his age, and in the fiftieth of his ministry, imploring the prayers of his people that he might not sink, while the waves of affliction dashed over him. His eyes ran down with tears; his people wept around him; his swelling grief choked his feeble utterance in almost every sentence, till he was obliged to terminate his discourse. He closed his sermon book, withdrew his spectacles, wiped off the falling tears, and then, lifting his suffused eyes toward heaven, he said, 'Let us find relief in prayer.' God strengthened him, and enabled him to lead our devotions with unusual fervor. He prayed for himself, his wife and children, his church and people, like a man who stood on the confines of eternity, like one who stood between the living and the dead. Never before nor since have we seen a Christian assembly so perfectly dissolved in tears. Some wept at the remembrance of those whom God had taken away from him; more by reason of their sympathy with his sorrows, and at the painful apprehension that they would soon hear his voice no more; and others because their hard, impenitent hearts were not prepared to offer to God acceptable prayer for their afflicted and beloved pastor. Prayer being ended, a hymn sung, and the benediction pronounced, we retired, wiser and better for the soul-stirring scene." — (American Quarterly Register, Vol. 15, pp. 118, 119.)

It was evident, through all the sufferings attending this bereavement, that the stricken patriarch had been schooling himself for his hours of sorrow. His favorite remark had been: "Affliction is the good man's shining time." One of his daughters, visiting him in his solitude, inquired: "Do you not feel anxious about your domestic arrangements, now that all your children, on whom you had specially depended, are in their graves?" His characteristic reply was: "Not in the least." He remembered his text: "And Aaron held his peace."

But a new sorrow awaited him. He had lived with his estimable wife about half a century. For twenty years she had been an invalid, suffering the severest pains from her broken limb. A faithful nurse who had attended her for seven years, remarked: "I have often heard her groan, but I never heard her complain." It was becoming obvious to Mrs. Emmons, that her consumptive habit and the consequences of her fractured limb, would soon release her from the earth. With her usual deliberation she made all the needful arrangements for the closing scene. She prepared her shroud. On Saturday eve, when her Sabbath began, she called her nurse to her bedside, and informed her that she should not

Digitized by Google

probably continue until the morning, desired her to bring the shroud which she had wrapped up by itself in a safe place, also to bring down the board on which the corpse of her son and her daughters had been laid, and which she had kept in a safe place (just so sacred was her care) — and to let her lifeless body rest on the same support which had upheld the remains of her children. She also requested that a man might be called to spend the night in the house, as there was only a small boy who could wait upon them, and he might be afraid to move about in the dark tenement where a corpse was lying. She further expressed her wish that Mr. Emmons might not be disturbed during the hours of sleep, as he would feel less burdened if he were to come into her room on the Sabbath morning, and find the long agony over, than to come at night and witness the pains which he could not relieve. Four days after this dark night, the old patriarch, in his eighty-fifth year, wrote the following letter to his wife's brother, John Hopkins, Esq., of Northampton, Mass.:

"FRANKLIN, Aug. 6, 1829.

"Dear Brother: The last Sabbath, about four o'clock in the morning, Mrs. Emmons exchanged that day of rest, I hope and believe, for 'that rest which remaineth to the people of God.' Your loss is great, but mine is irreparable. I am emphatically a pilgrim and stranger on the earth, having neither father nor mother, nor brother nor sister, nor uncle nor aunt living. I am left alone to bear the heaviest affliction I have ever been called to bear, in an evil time. Though I enjoy usual health, yet the decays of nature and the infirmities of old age render me less able to bear troubles and sorrows than I was in former days, when I was called to suffer breach after breach in my family; therefore this last and widest breach seems destined to bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to my grave. I sympathize with you, and I know you will sympathize with me. You knew the excellent character of your sister, but I knew more of her excellence, worth, and importance to me. She was indeed a rich blessing to me, and to her family, and to her people, among whom I believe she never had a single enemy. She was eminently a pattern of patience, meekness, and submission during a long life of peculiar trials, bodily infirmities, pains and distresses. She was — but I forbear. Her health was visibly declining through the Winter and Spring, but we did not view her immediately dangerous until the Tuesday before she died. She was apparently struck with death Saturday evening, but did not expire till morning. She retained her senses to the last, and left the world, not in triumph, but in that hope which was an anchor to her soul, both sure and steadfast. You and Mrs. Hopkins will, I hope, in your best moments remember your aged and bereaved brother:

NATH'L EMMONS."

In his Autobiography, this devoted pastor, noting his personal afflictions according to the Calendar of his Franklin church; and thus betraying his ministerial "passion strong in" his old age, simply writes: "Within a few weeks after Mr. Smalley's ordination, I was bereaved of



Digitized by Google

my dear consort, who closed her pious, exemplary life in peace to herself and all her surviving friends."

The Epitaph of this devout woman is:

To the Memory of Mrs. MARTHA EMMONS, the wife of Nathanael Emmons, D. D., who died Aug. 2, 1829, in the 79th year of her age.

O! stop the tear, nor sorrow for the blest,
But with her fair example, fire thy breast.
Her worth still lives, that living worth regard,
And with like virtue, seek the same reward.

Another wave of trouble was soon added to the billows which had gone over him. His son-in-law, Willard Gay, Esq., a gentleman of rare worth, was called suddenly from life, and the widow, having a frail constitution, and sinking under her unexpected bereavement, returned to her father's house, in order to receive that soothing influence which he was skilled in exerting over those who were agitated and disordered both in body and mind.

During each of his later afflictions, he was "an object of admiration to such as beheld the composure with which he sustained the shock, and of deep and compassionate interest to all who considered his great age and lonely condition." He had disciplined himself, by communion with Infinite Grace, to endure calamities with fortitude, and to make disinterested submission the virtue of his *life*, as well as of his *theory*. He had often reiterated his own words:

"Men are apt to murmur and repine because their troubles and afflictions come upon them in an evil time, when they feel less prepared and able to bear them than at any other time. They are ready to say that if they had been afflicted when they were young, or when they were in their full strength and vigor, or at any time before they felt the infirmities of old age, they could have borne it, but now their afflictions are too heavy for their feeble powers to support. But all ought to remember, that God knows the best times to afflict them, and always chooses the best times to do it. He may see it best, that some should bear the yoke in their youth that some should bear the yoke in riper years; that some should bear the yoke in their declining days; and that some should be afflicted, time after time, from the morning to the evening of life, and *then* receive the heaviest stroke. If it were left to the afflicted to choose the time of affliction, they would never know what time to choose. If it had been left to Aaron when his sons should die, he would not have chosen that they both should have died the same day, and the next day after he and they had been consecrated to the priest's office. If Eli had been allowed to choose the time of his sons' death, he would not have chosen that they should have died in one day, and at a time when he was stooping under the decays of nature, and when the bare news of his bereavement was more than he could support, and live. It is well that God does not allow men to choose when he shall afflict them, but has reserved the times and the seasons in his own power."

Digitized by Google

§ 2. *His Retirement from his Pastorate, and his Relation to his Successors in Office.*

"Becoming more and more sensible of the common decays of nature, and of the increasing infirmities of old age, I did, in 1827, entirely relinquish, and retire from all my ministerial labors, and opened the way for the settlement of another minister in my parish; and accordingly Mr. Elam Smalley was settled here in July, 1829." — *Memoir of himself.*

It had been a life-long decision of Dr. Emmons to retire from his ministerial office, 'while he had *sense* enough to do so.' "Any man," he remarked, "can lead an army into action, but it requires a skilful and experienced general to make a graceful retreat." He had noticed and bewailed the fact, that clergymen often persevere in preaching, until they regard themselves as brighter than ever before; and until their parishioners are compelled to adopt a large variety of expedients for hiding the light which is represented as bursting out into new flames. He recoiled from the thought of "becoming a burden to his hearers." He dreaded to *be* "*laid* aside as good for nothing." He chose to *lay himself aside*, and to save his parishioners from all solicitude with regard to his own tenacity of place.

"On the thirteenth of May, 1827, while delivering his sermon in the pulpit, he fainted." He was taken to his house, and did not recover his full strength for several days. Deliberately reflecting on this illness, which was so unusual to him, he was inclined to regard it not as an indication that he was near the end of life, but as an intimation of the will of God that he should now retire from the active duties of his office. The result of his thought on this subject, appears in the following communication:

"FRANKLIN, May 28, 1827.

"TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH AND TO THE MEMBERS OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF THIS PLACE:

"Brethren and Friends, — I have sustained the pastoral relation to you for more than fifty [fifty-four] years, which is a long ministerial life. The decays of nature, the increasing infirmities of old age, and my present feeble state of health, convince me that I must now retire from a field of labor which I am no longer able to occupy to my own satisfaction or your benefit. I therefore take the liberty to inform you that I can no longer supply your pulpit, or perform any ministerial labors among you; and at the same time, that I renounce all claims upon any future ministerial support; relying entirely upon your wisdom and goodness to grant, or not to grant, any gratuity to your aged servant during the residue of his life.

"NATHANAEL EMMONS."

This letter took his people by surprise. They did not regard him as

Digitized by Google

having failed at all in his public performances, except in the strength of his voice. He remained not less acceptable to other congregations, or to his own parishioners, than he had been for previous years. His people were not less grieved than astonished, by his withdrawal from the office which they thought him able to fill with so much honor. "Many of them were in tears." They remonstrated with him, but it was of no use. They desired him to remain Moderator of the church; but it was of no use. They insisted that he would occasionally at least perform some small part of his old duties; but his mind was *decided.* "I have turned a short corner" was his sure word. With unabated attachment to him as a man, with a grateful recollection of his past faithfulness, and under a deep sense of the loss which they now sustained, his people at length yielded their consent to his wishes, and took measures for the supply of the pulpit which he had vacated.

But it was difficult for parishioners trained for so long a time by so faithful a guardian, to become satisfied with any one as his successor. They listened to different candidates "for the space of more than two years." During this long period their paternal counsellor exerted himself with unwonted zeal, to procure for them exactly the right man. When Mr. Smalley (afterwards Dr. Smalley of Worcester, Mass., and Troy, N. Y.), was introduced to him, "*I like your name*" he said: for he could never outgrow his attachment to the Dr. Smalley of his younger days. Dr. Ide writes:

'The day of Mr. Smalley's ordination, although attended with associations peculiarly solemn to this aged servant of God, was nevertheless one which he appeared to enjoy very highly. He rejoiced in the union which now prevailed among his flock; in the joy and satisfaction which they appeared to feel in view of their prospects; and in the hope which he himself indulged, that the transactions of that day would be the means of lasting good to the people in whose spiritual welfare he felt the liveliest interest. He was now in his eighty-fifth year. Not more than once had he addressed his congregation, since he fainted in the pulpit. A deep silence and a most intense interest pervaded the great assembly when he arose to give the charge to his colleague. In a fow and tremulous voice, he thus began:

"Dear Sir,—More than fifty years ago, while standing near this memorable spot, I was consecrated to the Pastoral office over the church and religious society in this place, by my then fathers and brethren in the ministry, who have long since finished their course, and one after another gone the way of all the earth. A vivid recollection of those past scenes and events, awakens the most serious, the most painful and the most grateful reflections, anticipations, and emotions in my breast, on this affecting occasion. Though I have very frequently attended the

Digitized by Google

usual solemnities of an ordination, yet this, in which I am now appointed to bear a part, is to me, in many respects, the most solemn and interesting one that I ever attended in the long course of my protracted life. I never read of but one man who was placed in a situation similar, or more striking and impressive than mine at this present moment; and I hope I do feel, in some measure, as Aaron felt when Moses, at the divine command, took him and Eleazar his son up to Mount Hor, in the sight of all the congregation of Israel on the day of his death; and there stripped off his sacerdotal robes, and put them upon Eleazar his son and successor in the most holy and sacred office on earth. This instance, dear Sir, is instructive to us both. It tells me that I must soon die, but it supposes that you may yet live many years; and in that case, admonishes you to fill my place properly, and supply my deficiencies in the great work which I have forever relinquished."

'He entertained the council,' continues Dr. Ide, 'with a great number of other guests at his own house and at his own expense. There was a glow of health upon his cheek, his form was erect, his step was firm, and his movements were quick and regular. The excitement of the occasion served, no doubt, to bring all his powers both of body and mind into more vigorous action than usual. But it was remarked by a number who were present at that time, that his mental activity, his social powers, and the zest with which he participated in the enjoyments of the day, were more than equal to what young men are accustomed to manifest on similar occasions.'

Dr. Smalley has thus described his relation to Emmons:

"It was not without trembling solicitude that I entered upon that intimate and solemn relation with him, in the year 1829. I had serious apprehensions, that I should not be able to meet the demands of a people who had enjoyed his services for more than half a century; and knowing what collisions of opinion and feeling had often arisen between colleagues of different temperaments and habits of thought, I greatly feared that it would be impossible for me, in preaching and pastoral deportment, to secure his approbation in any tolerable degree. But after an experience of more than nine years, I can truly say, that it is practicable for associate pastors of the same church to live in perfect harmony and peace, though differing greatly in age, in temperament, in style of communicating thought, and in many of the modes of pastoral supervision. From the first, he won my affection and confidence, and taught me to trust in him as a friend and father. He only asked that I would yield to him his place and rights, and most cheerfully he accorded to me all that I could reasonably desire. It was my privilege to seek his advice on all occasions of interest and solicitude; and it was his pleasure to select from his rich and varied experience those maxims of practical wisdom, and those opportune suggestions, which at once removed apparent difficulties and pointed out a path of light. In his criticisms on my public performances, he was uniformly kind and candid. The stated seasons in which I used to go and sit at his feet to listen to his timely and varied instructions; to suggest my doubts and difficulties; and have them removed by his pithy and

Digitized by Google

sententious sayings, his luminous and ready statements, have a degree of sacredness in my mind, are among the most hallowed, the greenest spots on my memory of past years. With no mind have I been permitted to hold more intimate communion on the great truths of our holy religion than his; from no one have I ever received more unequivocal testimonials of disinterested friendship; and I seriously doubt whether the minister now lives, with whom I could spend nine years of such uninterrupted harmony and perfect good will, as I did when associated with him. Numerous and strong were my attachments to the church and people of Franklin; to break the ties that bound me to them was indeed painful; but it was long before I could feel willing to leave that father in Israel, with whom I had spent so many delightful and profitable hours. Yet, when at last I frankly told him my views, and confidingly asked him what I should do, he touchingly replied, 'Though I had hoped to be spared this trial, yet I do not see but you ought to go.' Now that he is dead, I mourn for him as a father; and yet I rejoice in the strong assurance that he is an inhabitant of that city which he was accustomed to speak of with glowing energy, and is holding communion with those sainted spirits which entered upon their reward before him."

We have seen that the characteristic plan of Dr. Emmons was to retire *wholly*, when he retired at all, from his parochial duties. "No ship can have two captains," was his motto. He determined to avoid, as far as he could, all possibility of invidious comparisons between himself and his successor, and of apparent as well as real interference between the purposes of the aged and those of the youthful clergyman. He uniformly refused to take any part in the public services of the Sabbath, after he had resigned his pastorate. He did mingle, however, in the spiritual efforts of his church after he became a private member of it, and during the revival of religion which occurred soon after the ordination of his successor, he was eminently useful in guiding the minds and hearts of many inquirers who came to his house for his counsel and prayers.

The health of Mr. Smalley's household rendered it necessary for him to resign his Franklin pastorate in 1838. His removal though painful to Dr. Emmons, gave a new exhibition of the Doctor's glowing attachment to his people. He again united his efforts with theirs to procure the resettlement of a pastor. These efforts were successful; and on the 23d of January, 1839, Rev. Tertius D. Southworth, was installed at Franklin. Dr. Emmons was requested, on this occasion, to give the charge, but he declined on account of his great age. Almost ten years had gone over his head since the ordination of his first colleague, and brought with them the debilitating influence of ninety-three years. He was able, however, to attend the exercises of the occasion, and to enjoy in a good degree the visit which he then received from a large number of his clerical and other friends.—Mr. Southworth has borne the following testimony to the virtues of a man who was surrounded with all the temptations of an *ex-pastor*, and died without yielding to them.

Digitized by Google

"I had received the impression that Dr. Emmons was austere, and arrogant; and of course, the legitimate conclusion was, that he would be a most uncomfortable colleague. But at my first introduction to him, his complaisance, and the kind and affable reception which he offered me, at once dispelled my false and groundless impression, so contrary to his nature and dishonorable to his character. From that time to the present, there has been no occasion to alter my favorable opinion of him. He never manifested the least inclination to dictate to me in my course, leaving me entirely unshackled and free. But his counsel he was ever ready to impart. This was always wise, disinterested, and seasonable. Gratitude to his memory demands of me an acknowledgment of many instances of advice peculiarly timely and very advantageous to me. As a counsellor he was to me inestimable. In this respect, I sensibly feel my need of him, and therefore sincerely and continually lament his death. He never gave me the slightest trouble by interfering with my arrangements. As he venerated the sacerdotal office, he always treated me with the greatest respect on account of it. He uniformly manifested towards me, the sincerest affection, kindness, and friendship. During my connection with him, his conduct was such as to command my highest respect, my deepest veneration, my sincere and ardent love. I never saw the man, — my own reverend father excepted, — whom I so much revered and loved. In fine, Dr. Emmons was such an one as a modest, humble man, who is willing to be outshone by the brightness of a sun of almost unrivalled glory, would wish for a senior colleague. At the feet of such an one, it was delightful to sit and listen to the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth, to the great things of God's law which he unfolded."

In a sermon preached on the Sabbath after the interment of Dr. Emmons, Mr. Southworth adds:

"*His idol*, if he had one, *was his parish*. It was the object of his greatest care, and tenderest solicitude. Even to his last days, he manifested the greatest concern for your welfare, watching for you with godly jealousy; often repeating, 'I do love Franklin,' and offering up for you some of his latest prayers."

### § 3. *His Third Marriage.*

When the subject of this Memoir was ordained, one of his clerical neighbors was Rev. David Hall, D. D., of Sutton, a personal and an intimate friend of President Edwards. Emmons enjoyed a profitable intercourse with this eminent revivalist for the period of sixteen years. He afterwards derived much enjoyment from the society of Rev. Edmund Mills, the brother of his old friend Samuel J. Mills of Torringford, Conn., and the successor of Dr. Hall at Sutton. For thirty-five years Emmons and Mills were members of the same (Mendon) Association. Mr. Mills died in 1825; and on the eighteenth of September, 1831, his widow, Mrs. Abigail Moore Mills, was married to Dr. Emmons. She was the sister of Rev. Zephaniah Swift Moore, D. D., President of Williams and afterward of Amherst College, who was an admirer of the

Digitized by Google

Franklin divine. She was a lady of an attractive and commanding aspect, great amenity of manners, a sagacious mind and a pious heart. She was admirably fitted to cheer the veteran student as he persevered in his inquiries after truth, and she was not called to rejoin him in his higher life, until she had witnessed the success of his posthumous Works, and rejoiced in the indications that his successors would award to him the justice which was withheld by his contemporaries.

### § 4. *The Renewal of his Public Activity.*

The light is often re-illumined after it has flickered in the socket. We read of one who regained his strength as soon as his body touched the ground. Emmons descended to a private station, but at once rose again into public activity. As in his earlier, so in his later years, he illustrated his favorite principle, that the Christians of the United States are summoned, first of all, to the Home Enterprise (see pp. 194–200), and to the removal of those barbarous usages which at once disgrace and endanger their land.

#### A. — His Services in the Cause of Anti-Masonry.

It had been his lifelong tendency to prize individual thought, to rely on such truth as could stand in the light of day, to oppose *factitious* influence, especially if it be secret. Accordingly he frowned upon all Institutions that aimed to hide their light under a bushel. He knew that many eminent divines were Free Masons; and that many, — among them, even Dr. Charles Backus, while they did not unite with the Lodge, consented to preach before it. But the open-hearted Emmons had long predicted mischief from the clandestine Union. He uttered, eighty years ago, the very complaints against the structure of Free Masonry, which its political opponents began to utter, about thirty years ago. When the political opposition rose against the Masonic Brotherhood, about the year 1830, he had no change to make in his opinions. He then expressed before the world, what he had been wont to utter before his pupils and parishioners. He was then eighty-five years old, but letters from fresh Anti-Masons poured in upon him in profusion, soliciting his presence at their Conventions, and urging him to say in public assemblies what he had always declared in social circles, that the Masonic Lodge is "an imposition on the world," by means of its gaudy displays and "pompous titles" and allurements to vice. The services which he then rendered to the cause of Anti-Masonry, have been acknowledged by the most eminent Anti-Masons of that day. One

Digitized by Google

of the Conventions chose a Committee to express their gratitude for the letter which they received from him, and to which they listened "with sentiments of high consideration," and with a "deep feeling of joy."

### B. — His Services in the Cause of Anti-Slavery.

Calvinism has been stigmatized by its foes as a barbarous creed. Emmons esteemed it as, in its essence, humane. He was grieved that any of its friends should hesitate to condemn the system of American Slavery. He had condemned it in his earlier and in his later sermons. He had spent his life not only in "making joints," but also in breaking chains. His Congregationalism was Anti-Slavery. When the modern excitement against the chattel-system sprang up more than a quarter of a century ago, it found him where he had been for three quarters of a century before. "*I am ready for it*," was his characteristic word.

Ministers have degraded themselves by their political action, when that action has played into the service of their opulent parishioners. Emmons rose up in his old age *against* the rich, and *for* the poor; *against* the judgment of idolized civilians, and *for* the down-trodden and despised. For a long time he stood well nigh alone among the eminent clergymen of the land, in advocating immediate measures for the emancipation of Africans "whom God has endued with powers of free moral agency," who illustrate "the dignity of such men as Jesus came to redeem." The Sketches of his Pupils afford a symbol of his influence in this once unpopular cause. Another symbol is suggested by the following episode in his life:

### *His Visit to New York, and to Hallowell.*

The interest of a Memoir is often heightened by the journal which the subject of it wrote, while on a tour through the cities and deserts of Asia. Dr. Emmons once made a visit to the city of New York! The journey from his native town to that metropolis, is now performed in a few hours. He never looked upon the city until the Spring of 1835, when he had just entered his ninety-first year. He had then begun a new life, and having received an urgent invitation from George Douglas, Esq. and Edward A. Russell, Esq., to make their houses his home during his sojourn in the metropolis, — the nonagenarian started forth on the longest tour which he had ever made. While he remained in the city, these hospitable friends did not spare either pains or expense to render his visit agreeable to himself and his companions. Many individuals and families of distinction were introduced to him, and he was treated everywhere with marked cordiality and reverence. 'His great age, his extraordinary activity both of body and mind, and especially his antiquated costume, would naturally excite the attention and curiosity of the multitude. But his eminence as a divine, was the great source both of the curiosity and respect with which he was beheld.



Digitized by Google

It was the week of the May Anniversaries. He attended and highly enjoyed the meetings of most of the benevolent societies which were held in the day-time. He was earnestly solicited to take some part in the public exercises, but he uniformly declined, except in a single instance. He did consent to act as President *pro tempore*, at the business meeting of the Anti-Slavery Society. He was influenced in this case to deviate from his established plan, on the ground that the circumstances in which he was then placed would speak an important language. The flame of liberty which was kindled in our Revolutionary struggle continued to burn in his aged breast. He knew that the sacred cause of freedom had recently been assailed in New York by a lawless mob; and that its few friends were now struggling, not only with the deadly hostility of slaveholders themselves, but with that unnatural sympathy which these slaveholders were receiving from many professed friends of freedom. It was interesting to notice the workings of his patriotic mind, when he received the invitation to attend this Anti-Slavery meeting. Some of his friends who were present, advised him to accept, and others to decline the invitation. He heard them both with candor and kindness, but made no decisive reply until one of the party said to him, "This may be the last public act of your life." He then immediately arose and said, "I must go."'

It would be a fit study for an artist, to exhibit on the canvas the old friend of Hopkins and Bellamy, as he sat erect in the last decade of his century on earth, and helped to initiate a new era of freedom in the land of the free.

He returned to his parsonage after an absence of eleven days, in as good health and as elastic spirits as the most robust of the friends who accompanied him. The tour gave him new courage to sally forth on lengthened journeys. In 1837, when ninety-two years old, he took a second steamboat excursion to Hallowell, Maine, the residence of his son, Hon. Williams Emmons. Returning to his old study he remarked with his wonted buoyancy, that he "might yet cross the Atlantic and make the tour of Europe." In April, 1838, when he was ninety-three years old, he took his last journey on earth, attended the ordination of his parishioner, Rev. A. R. Baker, at Medford, Mass., and visited Salem, Boston, Dorchester, and the neighboring towns. Politicians, as well as divines, came out to welcome him during these excursions, and received from him such racy, terse lessons as they afterwards loved to repeat in household

## § 5. *His New Popularity.*

"He buffeted a strong current all his days, both in Church and State." He concealed no truth because it was distasteful, he proclaimed no opinion because it was flattering to men. He resisted the clergy as well as the laity, his own denomination as well as "sectarians" when he deemed them wrong. His frank avowal of dissent from friends and foes, his independent and stern reprimand of rulers and people, theologians and infidels, high and low, made him for a time obnoxious to public censure. His meditations under the cloud of popular ill-will, were philosophical as well as Christian. "*In the end*, and on the whole, the evil will bow down to the good:" "A faithful minister will be honored at last by the men who receive his reproof, and by the men who reject it; and he enjoys all the benefit which he *does* confer upon the former,

Digitized by Google

and all which he *strives to* confer upon the latter:" — such were his prophecies of the reward that awaited him. He lived to see the cloud of his unpopularity roll away. Seldom has an author been loved with more enthusiasm by the considerate opponents of his doctrine. In an oration delivered by Judge Theron Metcalf, before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Brown University, September 4, 1832, eight years before the death of Emmons, a tribute which friends and foes welcomed with a loving heart, was paid by the erudite jurist to the pastor of his youth, in the following chaste and memorable words:

"It might occur, one would think, to the discretion of all men, and especially to clerical men, that the only way in which lasting respect can ever be acquired, is in the pursuit of worthy ends by worthy means. Indeed, as a matter of immediate popularity, a clergyman would find his account in the bold and faithful discharge of his sacerdotal functions, without anxious regard to applause or censure. I need not refer to Massillon, and Oberlin, and other honored dead, in proof of this suggestion. But I cannot resist the impulse which inclines me to allude to an eminent living divine, personally known to many of you; whose plain and unshrinking enforcement of his own views of truth, whose fearless reprehension of wickedness in high places and in low, and whose entire devotion, for more than fifty years, to the duties of his profession, have secured for him a most extensive and reverent respect, no less sincere and profound in the many who reject his peculiar opinions, than in the few who adopt them. I desire to be grateful, that in the place of my nativity, such an example of clerical dignity, fidelity, and contempt of the popularity 'which is run after,' was constantly before my youthful eyes; and that such an example of 'the popularity which follows,' is still before the eyes of the public."

Digitized by Google

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### SOURCES OF THE GENERAL INTEREST IN DR. EMMONS.

No sooner had he been called to his home, than the community were anxious to read his Memoir. His prudent associates were the most importunate for its immediate publication. This fact, of itself, is a biography. Those who were most familiar with him, felt that it was safe to expose his inner life, and that his biographer need not lie in ambush until his contemporaries were locked up in their tombs. His friends knew that many of his published writings give no adequate idea of himself as a man. They were written in the style of a secluded student, with somewhat of the severity which is natural to one living aloof from and above his race; but no one exhibition of his character exhausted him. His aspect, in the pulpit, and in the controversial treatise, will not display the whole of him. He had enough of material for five or six different portraitures; enough of manhood to fill out several quite notable personages. Not but that he had faults of mind and heart; he not only had them, but could afford that others should know them. "No man's character," he used to say, "will bear examining;" and again, "Everybody has something about him to spoil him." But his faults did not prevent him from receiving attentions which he never courted, or from finding honors which he never sought. While he disdained to run after the world, many wise men of the world went on a pilgrimage to him. What were the sources of the general interest felt in the Franklin metaphysician? The greater part of the following answer to this question was published by the writer of this Memoir, in his "Reflections of a Visitor," etc.



Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

RESIDENCE OF DR. EMMONS.

**The two windows at the left hand, on the first story, belonged to his study. "I have saved months of time," he said, "by having my study on the lower floor."**

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

## § 1. *The Cheerful Virtues of Emmons.*

Living in a still parish, on a quiet road, he might have been expected to contract an awkwardness and stiffness of manner, an habitual reserve and shyness, from which a man of the world is free. Perhaps he did exhibit some constraint when with strangers in a strange place; but in his own study, no one need be more courteous and affable. Cordiality and good-will marked his reception of his guests; whether they harmonized or not with his political or theological views. They found in him many sympathies in common with their own; they could not but see that their company was a pleasure to him; and they accordingly felt the ease and self-satisfaction, which it is the characteristic of a polite man to give his visitors. They expected to find an austere man, exsiccated by logic and abstractions. But they looked upon a face which was a picture of hearty kindness and good-nature; and although he was not unused to a knit brow in his study hours, he would converse on the literature, the politics, the news of the day, with a freshness of interest belonging to a citizen more than a scholar. "Whence hath this man these things?" was the frequent query of his visitors. That large, spacious white house, which every one would know was the minister's house, with the venerable trees before it, and the neat enclosure around it, was often called the minister's hotel; and no minister's horse would pass it a second time, without giving signs of pleasant remembrances.

Constitutionally, Emmons was a wit; if wit consist in the power of detecting such resemblances between dissimilar objects, and such differences between resembling objects, as will both surprise and please. Acuteness of discrimination is needed for discovering these diversities and similitudes. Dr. Emmons was proverbially acute. Alertness and vivacity of mind are essential for suddenly developing these relations. His mind was so rapid, that his witticisms would seem to come in showers. A brisk flow of animal spirits is necessary for that exercise which must at once produce two effects, astonish and please. He was seldom stupid, and the cheerfulness resulting from his well-controlled body and peaceful conscience, qualified him to please as well as to surprise. "He was the most uniformly cheerful man I ever knew," said a clergyman who had lived in his vicinity for thirty years.

Aware that wit is a dangerous faculty, he was philosophical in his management of it. He indulged it, as he partook of food, for the sake of preserving that health of mind, as well as body, which is a necessary condition of the highest Christian usefulness. He was not abstinent in all things, but temperate in all things. It is one sign of his true greatness, that he could be temperate in an indulgence from which weaker men abstain through fear of excess. He was free, on the one hand, from that superstition which dreads, as if sin were there, the appropriate exercise of a faculty implanted in our natures by God, and the tempered action of which doeth good like a medicine. He was generally free, on the other hand, from humoring even a constitutional susceptibility further than a just equipoise of the system demanded. When he had slept enough, or drank enough, or smiled enough, he would resume his toil. The indulgence of wit at improper times, in an improper degree, on improper subjects, becomes levity. From levity he was as free as from stupidity. If a serious topic required him to leave an amusing train of remark, he would drop his facetiousness, and show himself at home in the discussion or the admonition. The facility of his change from the one to the other, indicated that both were under the control of religious principle. When the bow was unstrung, it was so for a wise reason;



Digitized by Google

and he would generally seize it and bend it at the instant of the summons. "Mankind," he was wont to remark, "were made for *use*, not for *amusement*."

It is difficult to say how much of his wholesome action had been lost, if he had harbored that anile bigotry which would banish from our spiritual mechanism the lubricating oil of joy, without which the wheels drag, and the machine wears out. A man who could say, when nearly a century old, "I never took an hour's exercise for the sake of exercise, in my life," and who had withal some degree of constitutional irritability, would have become a morbid hypochondriac, or an obtuse plodder, unless his mind had received relaxation and tone, and elastic versatile energy, from the use of that gift which distinguishes men from brutes, and sane men from idiots. Indeed, there must have been some such recreation, in order to perpetuate his life through so many eventful periods, amid so many perplexing and fatiguing studies.

Some men, who are never guilty of startling others with agreeable remarks, have felt themselves authorized thereby to pronounce a censure upon Dr. Emmons as less apostolical in his conversation than they deem consistent with the command, "Be sober." But if sobriety consist in preserving the mental faculties free from indolence on the one hand, and morbid or useless action on the other, Dr. Emmons was a sober man. His gravity indeed was not such, that "Newton might have deduced from it the law of gravitation," yet it was a rational gravity. Few men have been further than he from that foolish talking and jesting which a scriptural philosophy condemns. There was a meaning in his wit. It was full of mind. One of our older writers would have said that his humor was not the "mere crackling of thorns, a sudden blaze of the spirits, the exultation of a tickled fancy, or a pleased appetite. It was a masculine and severe thing; the recreation of the judgment, the jubilee of reason." In what certain men would call his folly, he uttered more wise remarks than these wise men ever uttered in their wisdom. He knew what to say, and when and where to say it. In the private circle, on secular themes, he did not always express himself as if he were in the pulpit. He adhered to the resolution of President Edwards, "never to utter any thing that is sportive or matter of laughter on the Lord's day."

## § 2. *The prolonged Tenacity of his Physical and Mental System.*

In several applications of the term, tenacity was a prominent characteristic of his body and his soul. It marked his predilections for men and things. He was a fast friend; a steadfast advocate of the truth. The power of long-continued attention raised him above common men. It may be said of him as he said of another, "He could look half an hour at the point of a needle, without moving an eye-lid." Long after others had let go their hold of an argument, or of a specific phraseology, he would hold on, and hold out, and keep hold, and never let go. Possessing an athletic and well-compacted frame, a sanguine bilious temperament, he was formed for protracted labor, and an old age tenacious of health and energy. Only three days before his death, he made a remark which, for sprightliness and shrewdness, savored of the flower of his life. When eighty-three years of age he journeyed from Franklin to Haddam, driving his own horse forty miles a day, and conversing with singular discrimination. About the same time, he made one unwritten address to his townsmen, which was generally considered the happiest and most effective that ever came from him. It has been reported thus:

Some of his former parish, perceiving that their parochial guide had abandoned his

Digitized by Google

authority, and feeling disposed to taste the sweets of freedom, made an attempt to introduce Universalist preachers into the old pulpit. The parish were called together to act upon a petition for opening their meeting-house, occasionally, to other denominations; no particular sect being alluded to, but the Universalists being intended. Some of the Doctor's friends deemed it advisable to grant the petition, and hoped that a conciliating course would preclude a threatened schism. But he was inflexible. He said but little, and did nothing until the parish bell rung for the meeting. Then he called for his horse and chaise, calculated knowingly for the time spent in the preliminaries of business; and, when he supposed that his townsmen were ready to introduce the main topic, he rode to the meeting-house door, and with a quick and firm step walked to his pew. He took the parish by surprise. They had been looking for some other things, but not for this. The three-cornered hat, they all supposed, had been hung up, and this sudden re-appearance of it was like a resurrection from the grave. A highly intelligent citizen was speaking at the moment, in favor of indulging the petitioners; but when he saw the veteran pastor enter the house, he sat down. A deathlike stillness ensued. The sight of the octogenarian, at a business meeting of the parish, was so novel, that nobody could tell what was to come. Having asked, "What is the question now before the meeting?" the Doctor rose, and spoke for half an hour with uncommon sprightliness; exposed the absurdity of opening the house on the Sabbath for truth, and during the week for error; of building up one day, what is to be torn down the next; of weaving a web in the morning, and unravelling it at night. "This," he said, "is not what you have been taught. It is in the face of what you have heard for the last fifty years." He closed his speech with a keen and sarcastic address to that "respectable class of persons called Universalists." The petitioners looked at each other; feeling somewhat like the Indians at Hadley, when discomfited by the old regicide who suddenly presented himself as if from another world. As he was wont in his speeches, the Doctor stopped when he had done. Not a sentence was spoken afterward, except to take the vote, and this was nearly unanimous against the petitioners. Those who had favored a mitigation of the Doctor's strict regime, united in the general testimony that his master-piece of eloquence was in a forensic meeting, when he was about eighty-three years old; and after he had retired from the pulpit through fear, on his own part, of failing in his extemporaneous performances.

In describing his tenaciousness of mental vigor, there is need of some qualification. Between the ages of eighty and ninety he retained so much of his acuteness, that some did not perceive the least waning of his mind. It is doubtful whether there ever lived another divine whose conversation, when in his ninety-fourth year, on an intricate point of metaphysics, would be treated with especial deference; yet words dropped by Emmons, in regard to a theological nicety, when he had lived twenty-three years beyond the prescribed age of man, have been made the theme of prolonged discussion. But with all his retentiveness of the excellence which he once possessed, the old man of ninety was correct in thinking that he did not retain the whole. Miracle if he did. In the vigor of his life, his abstinence from egotism was exemplary. In his waning age, he lapsed into a habit of *thinking aloud* concerning himself. He had become so inwardly imbued with the Edwardean doctrine of "love to being in general," and love to *self according to the value of self*, that when fourscore years had dimmed his sense of propriety, he talked about Dr. Emmons as if Dr. Emmons were a third person. Any mistake which he had made, or injury which he had received, would be described by him as if they had no relation to him. I once asked him, "Did you ever correspond with any eminent clergymen in other lands?" "Not much," was

Digitized by Google

his reply; "I had the following intercourse with Dr. Ryland, of Bristol, England. In writing to Dr. West, he expressed a desire to correspond with a few of Dr. Hopkins's friends; with *any* of them, indeed, except Mr. Emmons, of Franklin." On the same principle, remarks in his praise would be repeated by the nonagenarian, with no more apology than if they were in praise of an absent one. These outflowings of a childlike frankness were agreeable to his friends; but they exposed him to the misapprehension of his foes.

Alluding to the failure of his memory toward the close of life, he was wont to say: "My mind is just like a sieve. It takes in a great deal, but all that is valuable runs through." His loss of power in retaining recent impressions, however, was a foil to set off his continued power in reasoning from remembered premises. One signal illustration of his logical faculty, surviving the acuteness of his senses, was given during a visit which an eminent civilian paid to him while he was on his dying couch. The civilian, formerly well known by Dr. Emmons, was introduced: "This is Mr. X. Y." The Doctor responded: "No! no! this is not X. Y.;" and he persisted in denying that the true name had been given him, but added: "I am glad to see you, whoever you are." The civilian engaged in a conversation on bygone scenes, and at length alluded to an incident connected with one of the Doctor's early sermons. The old man of ninety-five years roused up: "Did I ever tell *you* that? *When* did I tell you that? I never told that to more than *one* person. I told it to X. Y. *He* knows that, and I know that, and *nobody else* knows that. But *you* know that. Therefore you *must* be X. Y." Thus did his logic rectify his vision.

## § 3. *The Resemblance between his Outer and his Inner Being.*

The theory that the soul originally makes or develops the body, would find as much confirmation in Emmons as in any other man. He was no more *erect* in his outward, than he was *upright* in his inward nature. The neatness and order of his room and dress, were symbols of the exactness with which his thoughts were classified. He arranged his ideas in conversation, as methodically as he arranged his books upon their shelves. His chirography was precise like his logic, and he wrote a better hand at the age of seventy-five than at thirty-five. So did his mental discipline affect his physical organs. The provincial dialect concerning him was: "He is a *spry* man." His gait was brisk. "My feet are the best part of me," he replied when told at the age of eighty, that he walked like a youth of twenty. Dr. South would have said, that "his body was a fit workhouse for sprightly, vivid faculties to exercise and exert themselves in. It was of so much quickness and agility, that it not only contained, but also represented, the soul; for we might well suppose that where God did deposit so rich a jewel, he would suitably adorn the case." His hands seldom moved as if they were numb. The twinkling of his eye, as it darted out some bright idea, was the delight of the eyes of his beholders. His enunciation was rapid, and this added keenness and point to his repartees. The manner and the matter of his conversation were often sparkling. His quickness in retort took his companions by surprise. It was a rare man, who was not sometimes discomfited by the lightning-like rapidity of the Doctor's sallies, when he was in his happier moods, and disposed for an encounter of wit. Not his eye only, but his whole face would appear to scintillate; and his monosyllables would seemingly spring from him, instead of being passively uttered. Hence the *bon-mots* which came from him lose much of their force, when not associated with the vivacity and suddenness which his manner gave them. They did instant execution.

Digitized by Google

His sermon on the perdition of Judas was republished and reviewed by a Universalist clergyman, the review and the sermon being printed in the same pamphlet. He was asked, "What do you think of sending out together, before the world, two such things as your sermon and a Universalist's reply?" "It is against the law," was his sudden answer; "for it is said in Deuteronomy, 'thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together.'" (Deuteronomy 22: 10.)

On one occasion a Universalist minister called on him, and heard him express his disapprobation of certain new measures which the orthodox churches were adopting. His objections were uttered in the privacy of his own parlor, and of course without the slightest suspicion of their being made public. The next week he was told that all these remarks were published in a certain Universalist periodical, and would probably damp the zeal of some sincere Christians. "No, no," he replied, "that paper publishes so many falsehoods, that it cannot be believed when it publishes the truth; and every one who reads my remarks in it, will conclude, of course, that I never made them."

## § 4. *His Conversational Apothegms and his Socratic Method.*

"When I left his study," writes Dr. Joel Hawes, "I always carried away with me ingots of the most precious metal, to be worked up at my leisure." His conversation was full of well defined sentences which could be easily detached from their conclusions, and thus answer the etymology of the word, aphorism. On almost every one of the following remarks, he has been known to discourse with divisions and subdivisions, as regular as those of a Chapter on Syllogisms.

"The less Christians conform to the world, the more will the world conform to them."

"The more men have multiplied the forms of religion, so much the more has vital godliness declined."

"The weakest spot in every man is where he thinks himself to be wisest."

"If men will define depravity and volition as they ought to do, they will understand the most important doctrines of the Bible."

"Strict Calvinism brings God near to us; all opposing systems put him far away."

"Reason is the same thing in God, in angels, and in men."

"No blank in time or in duty did God ever make or mean; hence there can be no work of supererogation."

"Of the two Edwardses, the father had more reason than his son, but the son was a greater reasoner than his father."

"Whatever President Edwards investigated for himself, he understood and mastered; but in his treatise on Original Sin, he took his first principle on trust, and hence is like a great horse floundering in the mire. The more he tries to push through, the deeper in he gets."

"Retail geniuses are worth nothing. Go to the wholesale merchants, if you wish to buy knowledge."

"There was not a divine in America who understood the true use of the means of grace, until Sandeman drove some upon correct ground."

"The great objection to the writings of Tillotson, Barrow, and that class of preachers is, that they never teach the difference between a good and a bad man."

Being asked what is the difference between Natural Depravity and Original Sin, he replied: "Natural Depravity is the truth; Original Sin is a lie."

Digitized by Google

Being asked, "What is space?" he replied, "Nothing."

"Never reason from what you do not know."

"A man ought not only to know the truth, but to *know* that he *knows* it."

"If I were to prepare for the ministry again, I would study law first."

"If I had not chosen to be a minister I would have been a lawyer."

"I like lawyers best at a distance."

"I never could see how some persons could so manage as to be claimed on so many different and opposite sides. Why, I was never claimed only on one side, and hardly on that."

"I go," he said at the age of ninety-three, "with the Old School of New England divines half way, and then turn round and oppose them with all my might. I go with the New School half way, and then turn round and oppose them with all my might. The Old School must say less of passivity, the New School more of dependence."

At the age of ninety years Emmons adopted the following Socratic Method, in his conversation with a theological teacher: "Do you believe that God is the efficient cause of sin?" "No." "Do you believe that sin takes place according to the usual laws of nature?" "Yes." "What are the laws of nature according to Newton?" "They are the established modes of the divine operation." "Do you approve of that definition?" "Yes." "Put those things together."

"Do you believe that God is the efficient cause of sin?" "No." "Do you believe that he created the world by his mere volition; that he willed, and it was done?" "Yes." "Do you believe that his will is creative; that he has only to put forth a volition for an event, and the event takes place?" "Yes." "Do you believe that on the whole he willed sin to exist?" "Yes." "Was not his will creative then?" Pause.—"Is there any more harm in causing a thing to be, than in willing it to be?" Pause.—"My theory is, that God causes moral evil in the act of willing it; and you believe that he performs that act. If it be wrong to cause the evil, it is wrong to will it. I believe that he caused it, in no sense morally different from that in which you believe he willed it. Where, then, is the great discrepancy between you and me?"

## § 5. *The Combination of apparently discordant Attributes in his Character.*

One of our Theological Reviews has classed him with the German transcendentalists, and has ranged side by side the names of Hegel and Emmons. A more frequent criticism is, that he is too empyrical, plodding continuously over one low plain. Thus do men divide a great mind among different parties, giving to each a due proportion, and implying that the excellences of each may be gathered into one comprehensive spirit. What he was as a theologian, the same was he as a man. He not only aimed to combine, in one great scheme of Consistent Calvinism, various truths which seem to conflict with each other; but he also loved to combine, in one consistent character, the different virtues which seem to be mutually antagonistic.

He was a man of authority. One of his parishioners, riding homeward after a brief absence from town, overtook a chaise driven so slowly and surely, that it was known to be the minister's. "What shall be done. Shall I pass the carriage of Dr. Emmons? Shall *I* ride before *him*? That will never do." So the parishioner turned

Digitized by Google

into a cross road, went two miles or more out of the direct course, and thus gave play to the respectful instincts which his people generally felt toward him. Still he was affable and simple as a child. Men did not suspect, either in his presence, or in his absence, that he was desirous of gaining admiration by affected reserve, or of concealing a weakness under the garb of profound, abstracted thought.

He was a prudent man; else he could not have ruled so long and so well, in the Lord's house, especially during such exciting scenes as those of our Revolution, and the succeeding years. Yet he was frank, wearing before his heart a glass through which his companions might look. At times he was *too* transparent; but, in the general, it was his open-heartedness which gave so peculiar a charm to his character. Instead of evading an inquiry which he preferred not to answer, he would frankly tell you that he chose to be silent. "I do not wish to be catechised on that subject," was his reply to a distinguished Professor, who was pushing a personal examination rather too far. You would feel confident in his society, that you knew his attachments and aversions; sure that he was not searching for your opinions, in order to make such a use of them afterwards as you would dislike; free from suspicion that he was conversing as a diplomatist, and using language for the purpose of concealing his own thoughts and exposing yours. He never stooped in ambush, nor allowed his opposers to complain that they were decoyed upon false tracks. If, like some of the apostles, he had received a new name at the time of his ordination, what better name could have been given him than that of Nathanael? for he was an Israelite indeed in whom was no guile.

His simplicity was one of his noblest qualifications for a theological inquirer. When a *divine* becomes interested in dark and petty manœuvres, he loses his affinity for the truth which is noble and as the light. He mystifies what is plain, complicates what is simple, and makes that crooked which the Bible has made straight.

Modesty and self-respect are qualities which, though seldom coalescing in one man, were happily blended in Dr. Emmons. When he was in company with three or four strangers, he could not easily converse in the hearing of them all, but was embarrassed unless, while conversing with a single one of the strangers, the others were attending to something more than his words. He distrusted his ability to satisfy or please other men. Until the last Sabbath of his labors in the pulpit, he felt a tremor in view of addressing a multitude. "In one hour it will all be over," was the remark which he often made for the sake of tranquillizing his agitated system, as he appeared before an assembly. His diffidence or bashfulness did not, as it does in some, result from mere nervous weakness, or from being unaccustomed to society, or from a self-esteem which receives no sanction from the deference of the bystander. He was naturally predisposed to think of himself no more highly than he ought to think, and to esteem other men, in some respects, above himself. But not in all respects. He knew his own worth, and did not succumb to his brethren, when he believed that an impartial judge would require concessions from them. He was not arrogant, but where he felt that he had a right to govern, he governed. If one whom he knew to be his inferior assumed a lordly attitude, and spoke to him in the tones of a master, he signified to the supercilious disputant, that it were well for every man to keep his own place. He did not pretend to know what he was ignorant of, but sometimes confessed his inability to give the information which was desired and expected of him. He would not defend his assertions when he suspected them of unsoundness; but if he had made a mistake, he made an atonement for it by confessing it. On one occasion, he was severely criticized by the well-known Mr. Niles, afterwards Judge Niles of Vermont, before an Associa-

Digitized by Google

tion of ministers, to whom Dr. E. had just preached a sermon. He replied to the criticism, acknowledging its justness, and remarking that, somehow or other, he had not gotten into his subject when he wrote the discourse. His critic interrupted him, saying, "No, no, Mr. Emmons, that is not the difficulty; here it is; the subject never got into you." The criticism, he afterwards remarked, was no more severe than just. He once spent several hours in company with Dr. Burton, his distinguished opponent on the "taste and exercise" question, and was asked by one of his pupils, after the conversation had closed, "What was the result of your discussion with your antagonist?" "No result," was the frank and modest reply. "Neither of us broached the subject." Why? "We were both too much afraid of each other."

He had a peculiar mode of reproving an opponent, which indicated both his modesty and his confidence in his own opinion. Being aware that every important doctrine is liable to some objections, he was contented to show that the doctrine of his opposer was liable to greater objections than his own. When pressed with a difficulty, his resort was to prove that the same difficulty was involved in the system of his adversary. If, therefore, his opponent were pertinacious in repeating a query, which neither party could answer, he would say reprovingly, "You have no right to ask me that question; it belongs to you as well as myself; I can answer it as well as you, and you as well as I."

He was not always, however, thus delicate in rebuking an opponent. A divine of no small eminence, having read Dr. Emmons's sermon on the Atonement, a sermon which was encountering at that time some opposition, sent to the Franklin minister the following epistle, which was considered rather too laconic, magisterial, and patronizing to comport with the apostle's rule for the treatment of elders: "May 1st. My dear brother, I have read your sermon on the Atonement, and have wept over it. Yours affectionately, A. B. C." These admonitory words were no sooner read, than the following reply was written and sent to the Post-office: "May 3d. Dear Sir, I have read your letter, and laughed at it. Yours, Nath'l. Emmons." The reader will perhaps admit that there was no *shorter* way of reminding a man in high life not to overlook modest worth; and of showing that an elder in the church must be reasoned with before he is wept over. Few men could endure more meekly than Dr. Emmons to be *voted* down, or to be *reasoned* down, or even to be *laughed* down, but he had a peculiar repugnance to being publicly *wept* down.

There was a rare combination of candor with inflexibleness, of kindness with severity, in Dr. Emmons. He was aware that some readers of his works had been led by his phraseology, to look upon him as devoid of the milder graces. When such a reader once remarked to him, "I have come several miles out of my way to see you," he smiled, and said, "Now you see the bear. Men go out of their way to look at me, as if I were a wild beast. But see, I have no horns." Such was the confidence of his friends in the mellowness of his temper, that even the insane of his parish would sometimes insist on being sent to the parsonage for relief. When their request was granted, they uniformly received from him that gentle and affectionate treatment which their malady demands. He early adopted the same principles for the treatment of this afflicted class, which are now adopted by our most scientific physicians. Those who have read what in common parlance are called his Pharaoh and Jeroboam sermons, and thence derived their notions of his character, would little expect that his company would be sought as a balm for the wounded spirit, and a soothing appliance for an irritated nerve.

We might proceed in developing the combination of diverse excellences in Dr. Em-

Digitized by Google

mons; his union, for example, of celerity with caution, of impulsive energy with constancy and perseverance. If he had been a heavy moulded man, too lethargic to turn his eyes away from the one object that he happened to be plodding over, it would not have been so noticeable that he sat for threescore and ten years at one study table.

## § 6. *His Consistency with himself.*

In portraying the character of Emmons, it would be easy to make his Self-Consistency the central attribute, around which all his other virtues would arrange themselves. Psychologists may labor in solving the problem, how he could reduce so many original speculations into one system so well harmonized. He could not have succeeded so well, if his mind had not moved by clock-work. In this, as in other particulars, his personal character had an influence upon his scheme of theology, and his scheme of theology upon his personal character. Men were interested in him because he was original in his feelings, as well as in his thoughts. He felt, not because others did, not because men had taught him that he should feel, but because he felt spontaneously, as himself, for himself. His emotions being his own, were harmonious with one another. It was commonly said of him, Every one knows where to find him, what he will think of a new measure, how he will treat an old friend. It would be an absurdity for him to appear with a bell-crowned or leghorn hat, to ride in an uncovered carriage, or a worn-out chaise. Standing up, or sitting down, at home or abroad, silent or conversing, cheerful or grave, he was just like himself. "He never did that, for that does not sound like him," was good logic with regard to his conduct; and this was his great distinction above other men. He did not follow a party, but always meant to follow truth; he did not yield to a fashion, but always meant to comply with the canons of taste. Wherever his best friends went, he went with them or stayed behind, just as he was advised by his fixed principles. Hence his life is a study. It had one organizing force, and became a unique system.

## § 7. *His Peculiarities of Manner.*

He did not attain that entire well-rounded completeness of character which allows not even an outward idiosyncracy. He sometimes worked his intellect with so great intenseness, and found so little intermission of his cares, as to lose for a few moments his wonted amenity, and to say or do things which might with reason be expected of a laborious recluse, but not of a perfect man. Still it is not extravagant to affirm, that no hard student ever passed seventy years, in one room, with fewer morbid excitements; and if, for a short time, some scholars may have surpassed him in kindliness of manners, these were rare favorites of Providence; and after all, his smiles were diffused through so long a life, that perhaps, in the end, they would outnumber those of the happy men who contracted their joy into a briefer period.

His peculiarities added a freshness of interest to his life. One of them was, to stop his conversation in an instant, when he perceived that neither himself nor his friend in the colloquy was deriving either pleasure or profit from the intercourse. (See pp. 77, 78, above.) He would desist at once from a dispute, when his antagonist repeated an objection which had just been answered three or four times, or proposed a question which was too simple or absurd to merit a reply, or persisted in misunderstanding what he had explained over and over again. He knew that he was thought to have a genius for caustic repartees, and he chose to be utterly silent rather than to indulge in



Digitized by Google

them. This silence was intended for a reprimand to his antagonists, but was sometimes interpreted as a sign of his own discomfiture.

He was visited once by a theologian of extensive fame, who allured him into a debate on the theory of optimism. The objector closed his lengthened argument against the Edwardean doctrine with this query: "If you *now* say, that the present universe is the best possible, what would you say if the universe were made twice as large and twice as good as it is? Would not the doubling of it augment its value?" Dr. Emmons blushed, and made no reply. The visitor reported that this one question confounded the Franklin optimist. I heard the boast, and afterward inquired of the veteran who had been thus silenced, whether he remembered that fatal question. "I do," was the reply. "Why did you not answer it?" was my second query. "It was the question of"——*a man who did not understand the rules of logic* [the Doctor in fact used a more racy phrase than this long periphrasis]. If the present universe is the best possible, then it is the best possible in its *relations*, and any increase of the *created* good would disturb the best relations of that good to the Creator, and would thus be on the whole an evil. I had repeated that idea so often, that I could not afford to utter it again."

Another divine of great renown, supposing that Dr. Emmons believed the soul to be nothing more than a series of exercises, addressed to him this question at the close of a protracted controversy: "On your principles, cannot God create holy feelings in the back of that chair on which you are now sitting?" I once heard this interrogator say: "When I proposed my query to Dr. Emmons, he blushed, and could not say one word in reply." But the reddened mute referring to that interview and that query, remarked: "He asked me a nonsensical question, and I made him no answer." — In the year 1786, forty years before this conversation, Emmons had published the sentence: "The horse and the mule, which have no understanding, and indeed all the lower animals, are utterly *incapable* of holiness, and *even Omnipotence himself*, to speak with reverence, *cannot make* them holy, without essentially altering the *frame* and *constitution* of their *natures*. But man *is capable* of holiness." Having reiterated this idea again and again, through a longer period than his interrogator had breathed the air, the venerable disputant preferred to waste no more breath in repeating so trite an adage. (See pp. 412, 417 above.)

On the eleventh of August, 1838, when he wanted less than seven years of being a centenarian, he was visited by another divine, who afterwards published an essay, filling more than a hundred and fifty duodecimo pages, in regard to his "Memorable Interview." In the flow of his conversation this distinguished visitor used such words as "*mercurial*," "*summation*," "*façade*," "*eclaircised*," "*contour*," "*alembic*," "*truth eliciting fecundity*," etc., etc. Now the old man of ninety-three years had been long wonted to drink seven spoonsful of new milk, warm, pure, and fresh from the cow, every morning and evening, and along with this innocent liquid he had imbibed a prejudice, as we all at that time of life may lapse into some antipathy, against the use of new or Gallic or Latinized words in any familiar talk. But his guest not only made a display of learned polysyllables, he also accused the nonagenarian of believing that it is wrong for men to love themselves, that all love to self is sin, that men are commanded not to love their own happiness in the least degree. The patriarch was amused if not amazed, by this charge, for he knew that he had taught exactly the

Digitized by Google

opposite doctrine before his accuser had learned the English alphabet; and that the entire system of Emmonism is built up on the principle that every man *may*, and *must*, and *should*, love himself; that this love to self 'is a privilege, an instinct, and a duty.' (See pp. 393, 394, above.) The veteran kept his patience while his oratorical friend exhibited the proof that men have a right to love themselves. This doctrine being proved, as Emmons had proved it sixty years before, the listener broke his ominous silence by the words: "Why, I am wrong; surely I am wrong, Sir." It was a characteristic reply. He meant it as a laconic reproof to his accuser. It was a pithy announcement that he anticipated no more edification from that *colloquium*. But his guest misinterpreted the sententious irony, as he had misunderstood the entire creed of the patriarch. He exclaimed: "I am wonderstruck and overwhelmed. We seem to reach a result portentous, unexampled, unexplained."—"I give you the credit and God the glory, of your making a magnanimous confession, the like of which, its proper parallel, I never knew before as a fact in history"! The magnanimous patriarch deemed it of no use to rectify this new misapprehension; and, when he was left alone with his family, one bright word about the interview shot forth from him like a meteor, and he never alluded to it again. It was his life long habit never to triumph over the mistakes of friend or foe.

## § 8. *He was a Representative of the Ancient Divines of New England.*

Dr. Emmons often spoke of himself as being left alone, all the old familiar faces long since veiled from his view. There has ever been a melancholy and sombre interest flung over such a man, staying so long behind his time, and watching over the fourth generation of his successors. He has been likened to the bird that lingers in a northern hemisphere, long after its companions have sought a more genial clime; to the soldier compelled to slacken his movements, and loiter alone in the land of the enemy, when his comrades have marched through, cheered with the sound of the bugle and the society of a full band, in the hope of soon regaining their home and enjoying their laurels. He has been compared, by an ancient poet, to the oak that stands solitary, after the surrounding forest has been hewn down, and that stretches out its stiffened arms, as if to implore mercy from the winds and the storm.

The regimen of Emmons, in body as well as in mind, illustrates the healthful discipline of the New England fathers. Both he and they were formed for long life. They were so regular in their habits, so free from the excitements to which the clergy are now exposed, they held so tense a rein over their passions, that they could not waste away and consume themselves as their successors do. Mr. Stoddard, of Northampton, died at eighty-six; Dr. Increase Mather at eighty-four; Dr. Cotton Mather at sixty-five; Dr. Stiles at sixty-eight; Dr. Johnson at seventy-six; Dr. Hopkins at eighty-three; Dr. Bellamy at seventy-two; Dr. Hart at sixty-nine; President Chauncy, of Harvard College, and Dr. Chauncy, of Boston, at eighty-two; Dr. Smalley at eighty-six; Dr. West at eighty-four; Dr. Strong at sixty-eight; Dr. Lothrop at ninety. Rev. Joseph Adams, of Newington, Maine, an uncle of President John Adams, sustained an active pastorate at Newington sixty-eight years, the longest active pastorate ever known in New England, and he died May 20, 1784, at ninety-five years of age. Emmons reached as great an age, and but for his modesty, might have held on as long upon a single pastorate. His life exemplifies the rules for permanent influence.

Digitized by Google

"Were you familiarly acquainted with President Dwight?" I once inquired. "Many and many a time," he answered, "have I dandled him on my knee. When I was at Yale I used to take him up in my arms. He was a very pretty boy." Thus did the patriarch bring us near to men whom we associate with all that is great. He not only resembled the fathers in his antique dress, his ancestral pronunciation, his courtly manners, his cheering repartees, but in his principles of reasoning, and the general style of his thought. He was a recent *man*, but an ancient *theologian*. His remarks on both the Edwardses, and on the school which they founded, are numerous enough and important enough to form a volume of the Dogmatic History of New England.

He has been often condemned for employing terms which express an *intellectual* state, when he means to express a *moral* state. Thus he speaks of "*approving*" a character, when he intends to include the idea of *preferring* that character; and he uses the phrase, "a right *sense*" of truth, when he means to imply a right *choice* of that truth. But in this peculiarity of style, he represents President Edwards, and other fathers of New England.

He has been criticized for a smaller degree of familiarity with the Hebrew language, than has been attained by John Cotton, Thomas Thacher, Cotton Mather, Presidents Dunster, Chauncy, Cutler, Stiles, and other New England fathers. He acted on the principle of Martin Luther, that "to make a good and judicious Christian, it is not enough to understand Greek and Hebrew. St. Jerome, who knew five languages, is inferior to St. Augustine, who understood but one." As is said of Dr. Sangrado, "he had published a book," before the clergy of New England were initiated into the *modern* science of criticism, and we must not expect that a man of seventy years will remodel his style, and look out for *shevas* and *dagheshes* at the opening of a new era in sacred literature. It is rare praise which is rendered to John Knox, that he began his study of the Hebrew when he was fifty years of age.

We wish that Emmons had been an immaculate divine. Still, in the imperfection of his Hebrew learning, he represented the majority of our ancient theologians. Both he and they attended more to the analogy of faith, to the consecutiveness of the inspired thoughts, than to the Hebrew words in which those thoughts were clothed. We must remember, that there are witlings who sneer at Lord Bacon for his ignorance of many truths which are now taught at the infant school. But the child who can do, at the present day, what a giant could not do in days of old, is still a child, and may never become a giant. Our fathers were Biblical students, and Biblical preachers, although more conversant with the matter than with the Hebraistic form, with the substance than with the oriental drapery of the inspired oracles. Instead of triumphing that we find so many exegetical errors in their works, we should wonder that we find no more.

Digitized by Google

# CHAPTER XIX.

## THE CLOSING SCENES OF HIS LIFE.

SOMETIMES it appears to the readers of Emmons that his favorite theme of meditation was, Old Age. A volume might be filled with his thoughts on this topic. During his hale manhood he had been preparing himself for a likeness to "good old Barzillai," who seems to have been one of his favorite characters. In the same anticipatory spirit, he spent "the chair-days of a most reverend age" in schooling himself for his last lesson on earth. The following are,

### § 1. *His Meditations on Death.*

"It is a great thing to die. The thought of it is very solemn and almost overwhelming. I have now a great deal of time to think, and I do constantly think of the change that is before me. I sit here and think of the disembodied spirit, the nature of that change which the soul undergoes at death, and the condition of those who have entered the eternal world." These were the remarks that fell from him two years before his journey to the better land. The style of his meditations on that journey, on the manner of starting, on all the things that would befall him in his progress, on his arrival at his long home, on his employments there, is intimated throughout his writings.

"Departed spirits never get lost on their passage from this to another world, however great the distance. They are probably conveyed by those good or evil spirits who attended them through the scenes and changes of their probationary state. Good men are attended by good angels, and bad men by bad angels. They know by their conductors whither they will be conducted. Who can conceive the strong and strange emotions of their hearts, while traversing unknown regions with their new conductors to the places of their final and eternal residence?"

"If the conversion of a soul fills all heaven with joy, there is reason to think that the arrival of that soul in Paradise spreads a greater and more general joy among the blessed who had been waiting for the happy event. While those who are left lament;



Digitized by Google

those who meet, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. The spirits in prison are not less, though differently, affected by the arrival of a poor, miserable, guilty, malignant spirit among them. Like Dives, they dread the increase of their numbers, which adds poignancy to their torments. The prophet forewarned the king of Babylon, that *hell from beneath should be moved at his coming.*"

"When saints arrive in heaven, they are without doubt severally conducted to the mansions which Christ has gone before to prepare for them. And those who have acted a better part on the stage of life, and done more good in the world than others, may be rewarded according to their works, by having better seats assigned them; that is, by being placed nearer the throne of God, and the personal presence of Christ." —"As the principalities and powers in heavenly places may be seated above the patriarchs, the prophets and apostles, so these may be seated above common Christians, who will be in the same manner locally distinguished and favored according to what they had done and suffered for the honor of Christ." — "They will feel that gratitude to their Redeemer which angels cannot feel, and sing that song of praise which angels can never learn, and will give Christ a pleasure which angels cannot give him. Their peculiar love to Christ will excite his peculiar love to them, and move him to put them into the best mansions in his Father's house, where they must be the happiest of created beings."

In his Memoir of himself, after grouping together the afflictions of his later life, he says, — and this is near the last, perhaps it is the very last, passage which he wrote in his Autobiography: "I now enjoy, as I have generally enjoyed, a good state of health, and have good reason to say, 'Hitherto the Lord hath helped me.' I know the time of my departure is at hand; and I think I can say with some sincerity, I have fought a good fight, I have nearly finished my course, *I have kept the faith*, and cherish a comfortable hope, that I shall finally receive that crown of righteousness, which awaits all the faithful ministers and followers of Christ."

Conversing on the probability of his speedy removal, the simple-hearted pilgrim said: "When I first enter heaven, I shall feel ashamed of myself, that I have done no more good on earth." — Again, "When I first enter heaven, I shall say, By the grace of God I am *what* I am, and *where* I am."

On another occasion, in the same view of his speedy departure, Dr. Ide describes him as saying: "I want to go to heaven. It is an inexpressibly glorious place. The more I think of it, the more delightful it appears." After expressing his desire to behold the exhibition of divine glory in the upper world, he added: "And I want to see *who* is there; I want to see brother Sanford, and brother Niles, and brother Spring, and Dr. Hopkins, and Dr. West, and a great many other ministers with whom I have been associated in this world, but who have gone before me. I believe I shall meet them in heaven, and it seems to me our meeting there must be peculiarly interesting." — "I want to see, too, the

Digitized by Google

old prophets and the apostles. What a society there will be in heaven! There we shall see such men as Moses, and Isaiah, and Elijah, and Daniel, and Paul. I want to see *Paul* more than any other man I can think of." — "I do *love* the gospel. It appears to me more and more wonderful and glorious every day. I think I now understand something about the gospel; but I expect, if I ever get to heaven, to understand a great deal more." — The question in some form or other, was suggested, Whether he was certain of obtaining salvation? He replied, "I cannot say, I am *certain* that I shall be saved; but I have no doubt on the subject." — "I have an assurance of *faith*. I can say, I do *know* that the doctrines which I have preached are true. And I can almost say, I have an assurance of *hope*. I have no doubt that, through Jesus Christ, I shall be saved." — 'He often,' as his son-in-law remarks, 'spoke of Christ as the only foundation of his hope, and he described the satisfaction which he felt at the thought of being saved through him alone.'

'He frequently,' Dr. Ide continues, 'expressed surprise that God spared him so long; and although he uniformly appeared to be patient with the continuance of life, and often expressed his conviction that long life was a blessing; yet there were times when he evidently desired to depart. Some days before his last sickness, he was suddenly taken ill, and fears were entertained by his friends that he would not recover. While one of them was conversing with him in the evening, he said, "I hope I shall be permitted to go, if it may be the will of God, before morning." But during the night he revived, and in the morning was much better. He said to the same individual, "I am sensibly relieved, and I may be spared some time longer, but I cannot help feeling disappointed."'

Though a submissive veneration was the most obvious feature in his religious developments, yet I have sometimes heard him converse on the heavenly state with the familiarity of one whose thoughts found their home in the skies, and with the artlessness of one who did not query with himself how his thoughts would appear if made known to the world. 'I have no doubt,' he once remarked to me, 'that spirits will know each other in the coming life — and how many inquiries shall we have to make of each other! It will be pleasant to see and converse with Adam and Noah, and the patriarchs; but I think I shall be as anxious to be introduced to the apostle Paul, and Martin Luther, as to any one who has gone there before me.' I can never lose the impression made upon me when, at the age of ninety-four, he spoke of his decease, which he must speedily accomplish; and said with a child-like diffidence, and with the simplicity of a great man, 'I confess that I look forward with interest to the time when I shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. I

Digitized by Google

have a great curiosity to look upon David and Isaiah; and I long to talk with Paul. Paul was a wonderful man. But especially will Jesus Christ and God fill my thoughts. I do not know, however, that I shall be saved. If another man should be the subject of all my exercises, I think I should have a hope of *him*. But it is a great thing to be allowed to enter heaven. Perhaps I shall be shut out. But if I am *not* saved, I shall be *disappointed*.' The semi-tone with which this last word was uttered, the rigid pressure of his lips, and the long pause that followed it, bespoke at once the humility, faith, and submission which he had cherished in his bosom, as a jewel too precious for the promiscuous gaze. I left him a few moments afterward with the profoundest reverence for his piety, and I never saw him more. There was something in his silence, — in what he did *not utter*, except with his significant eye, — that beggars description.

## § 2. *His Decline and Death.*

After his ninetieth year the internal cancerous affection which finally terminated his life, began to debilitate him. 'His bodily strength,' says Dr. Ide, 'failed in slow degrees, and although on the whole he continued to enjoy a remarkable flow of spirits, yet there were short intervals when his usual vivacity was suspended. During a portion of every day he would appear dull, and sometimes would remain for hours in a gentle slumber. At other times he would be wakeful, lively, and as bright as in the days of his youth. Even until the period when he became unable to speak, there were intervals when his judgment appeared as sound, his conversation as full of practical wisdom, as at any former period.

'He spent his time principally in reading, until he became too weak to endure this exercise. At the age of ninety-one and two, it is believed that he devoted as much time to books as most ministers do in the meridian of life. Though he could not long remember what he read, yet he appeared to understand it as well, and to enjoy it as highly as ever; and it afforded him fresh topics of interesting conversation with his friends from day to day. At this late period, he not only made himself acquainted with the leading periodicals of the time, but he also encountered many a massy volume. When he became unable to read, he would listen attentively to the reading of his friends. During the last year of his life, he seldom attempted to use his own eyes on the printed page, but would attend for consecutive hours to the books read to him by his attendants. When visited by his grandchildren, he would spend a part of the time in amusing and instructive conversation, and then

Digitized by Google

request them to read or sing to him.' It is an interesting fact that, as he early acquired a fondness for sacred song, so he did not lose his musical taste until his dying day.

This dying day did come at last. After having lived the life of a self-scrutinizing and self-suspecting Christian for seventy years, having been far more conversant than the majority of our best men, with those awe-inspiring themes, Sovereignty, Decrees, Reprobation, Justice, Eternal Penalty, Disinterested Submission, he was at length told that his end drew near, and he must soon stand in the presence of his Judge. "I am ready," was his reply; and to those who knew him, he could not have uttered more consoling, more satisfying words. They were the index of his decided, matured, considerate hope; a hope formed under the influence, not of the promises merely, but of the threatenings also; not solely of God's forbearance, but also of his inflexible rectitude. It was the hope of a man looking to the cross indeed, but also to the august and pure throne; of one who had exalted the gospel, and magnified the law. Had he been less rigid and unbending in his enforcement of the stern precepts which come from Sinai, less cautious and reverent in his exposure of those religious feelings that are almost too sacred to be exposed, the three words, "I am ready," had not been so full of meaning; but now they were the history of the man, of his past fears, his present hopes. He measured his syllables, and shrunk back from the least parade of piety. And if, after the application of his rigid tests, he dared to express a hope, even a trembling hope, of receiving a welcome to paradise, we instinctively repose a steadier confidence in that hope, than if it had not passed through so protracted and fiery a trial.

'During his last sickness, he would say but little. His throat was in such a state, that he could seldom utter an intelligible word. He appeared, in general, to enjoy the perfect use of his reason, and several times he seemed very desirous of communicating something to those who stood near him, and made a great effort to speak articulately and distinctly. But his meaning could only now and then be ascertained. A few hours before he died, he turned his eyes upon one who sat by his bed, and addressed him with great earnestness for some time. It was peculiarly painful to behold him striving in vain to make himself understood, and no small disappointment to his friends not to know what he would say in his departing moments. But he had left nothing to be done in a dying hour. He had given his friends and the world entire satisfaction in regard to his own preparation for heaven. They had repeatedly heard from his lips when in health, all, and more than all, which any man could impart in death.

Digitized by Google

'It is gratifying, however, to know that up to the time when the power of speech was taken away, his conversation was such as to indicate a readiness to meet his change. He was asked if he expected to recover, and he answered "No." He was asked if he had any fear of death. His answer was, "I cannot say that I have no dread of the passage through the dark valley; but I am not afraid of what is beyond." "Your hope then sustains you in this trying hour," replied his friend. "O yes, I believe that I shall be accepted. I shall be greatly disappointed if I am not." He was asked if he was desirous "to depart and be with Christ." His answer seemed to indicate some remains of an instinctive dread of the agonies of death, while it showed that his heart was in heaven. "I don't wish to die to-day, nor to-morrow; but the thought that I shall soon be gone gives me pleasure." He always had a very great dread of pain, or bodily suffering. It was his desire, if it might be the will of God, to have an easy passage from the earth. And during his sickness he frequently expressed his gratitude that he went down so gently, and his hope that his removal might be without a severe struggle. But it was the will of God that he should taste the bitterness of death. During the night previous to his departure, his distress for breath was frequently very great. Just before the closing scene, however, he was comparatively free from pain, and when he actually left the world, it was with so little alteration in his appearance that no one in the room could tell when he ceased to breathe.

'On Wednesday, the twenty-third of September, 1840, about three o'clock in the morning, his spirit took its upward flight. Though this event had been for some time daily expected, yet when it came it produced a sensation which could not be anticipated. Every one felt that a great and good man had fallen, that a valuable friend had been taken away, and that the community had sustained an irreparable loss. "The glory is departed," was written upon the walls of his house, and desolation marked the place of his former residence.' — *Dr. Ide's Memoir*, pp. 123, 124.

On the day of Emmons's death, he had reached the age of ninety-five years, four months and twenty-two days.

### § 3. *The Solemnities that followed his Death.*

At eleven o'clock on Monday, the twenty-eighth of September, forty-five clergymen assembled at the Franklin parsonage to look, for the last time, upon the face with which some of them had been familiar for half a century. Rev. David Long of Milford, offered a prayer at the house,

Digitized by Google

and then the procession was formed for the Sanctuary.[1] Between two and three hundred children, whose fathers and grandfathers or even great grandfathers he had baptized in their infancy, walked first in the procession, and were followed by the men and women of the *Society*, after whom came the members of the *Church*, "not one of whom took an active part in his settlement." He had requested to be buried in a plain black coffin. It was borne on a hearse, eight elders of the town serving as Bearers, the youngest of whom had passed his seventieth year, and eight clergymen officiating as Pall-Bearers, the eldest of whom was in his eighty-first year. These clergymen were Rev. David Kellogg, D. D. of Framingham, Rev. John Pierce, D. D. of Brookline, Rev. Benjamin Wood of Upton, Rev. Elisha Fisk of Wrentham, Rev. Calvin Park, D. D. of Stoughton, Rev. David Long of Milford, Rev. John Codman, D. D. of Dorchester, Rev. Mark Tucker, D. D. of Providence, R. I. On arriving at the front door of the Sanctuary, the immense procession opened to the right and left, and the Bearers "bowing under the weight of years, carried the remains of their pastor through the weeping throng." In the draped old meeting-house, the anthem, "*I heard a voice from heaven*," etc., was sung by the choir, without the aid of a single musical instrument; the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes was read by Rev. Thomas Williams; the ninety-ninth Psalm of Watts, "*Exalt the Lord our God*," etc., was sung; the Funeral Prayer was offered by Rev. Elisha Fisk; the sixty-seventh Hymn of Watts's Second Book, "*Great God, how infinite art Thou*," etc., was next sung; a sermon occupying an hour and fifty-seven minutes in the delivery, and holding the undivided attention of the audience, many of whom were dissolved in tears was delivered from Ecclesiastes 12 : 8, by Rev. Thomas Williams, who, more than twenty-two years before, had been requested by Dr. Emmons to preach his funeral discourse; the closing prayer was offered by Rev. Dr. Codman; the Psalm, "*From all that dwell below the skies*," etc., was then sung. The procession, being again formed, moved to the grave, passing the old mansion where the pastor had lived seventy-five years. At the burial-ground an original hymn was read, after the primitive manner, line by line, and sung to the tune of Old Hundredth. Nothing could be more affecting, than to see the old men weep as the

[1] It is an interesting fact, which may deserve a mention here, that not only did Emmons's parish remain entire, but his meeting-house remained unaltered until his death. The high pulpit, and the old square pews were not removed while he lived. His funeral was the last religious service performed in the house, before it was modernized. The day of his death had been appointed for the commencement of essential repairs upon the edifice, but in consequence of that event they were deferred; and the dismantling of the church did not begin until the day after the interment of the patriarch. It was fitting that so long as he lived, all things should remain as they were aforetime.

Digitized by Google

coffin was laid in its last resting-place. Then Hon. Williams Emmons, the only surviving son of the deceased, with a voice well nigh choked by emotion, expressed the thanks of the bereaved household for the sympathetic attentions of the vast concourse. A large part of the assembly had travelled many miles to mingle in these solemnities, and had fasted from early morning until the sad rites were closed, at five o'clock in the afternoon.

Dr. Emmons had requested that his grave-stone be like that of his parents, and each one of his buried household, — a plain blue slate stone. His epitaph is in these words

To the Memory of
REV. NATHANAEL EMMONS,
Pastor of the Church in
Franklin.
Born May 1, 1745.
Ordained April 21, 1773.
Died Sept. 23, 1840,
In the 96th year of his age,
and the 68th of his ministry.
The truths of the gospel,
and the duties of his sacred
calling, were his delight.
"He meditated on these
things, gave himself wholly
to them, and his profiting
appeared to all."

On the seventeenth of June, 1846, his admiring parishioners held a jubilee as they erected another monument to Dr. Emmons, on the common between his ancient dwelling-house and meeting-house. The shaft is of granite, seventeen feet high, resting on a granite pedestal four feet, six inches in length and breadth, two feet, one inch in height. It is enclosed with an iron railing, and bears on its front the simple inscription —

N. EMMONS, D. D.
Aged 96.

Rev. Mortimer Blake, of Mansfield, Mass., delivered an able address at the erection of the Monument; Rev. T. D. Southworth, of Franklin, President of the Monument Association, made an appropriate speech as he deposited various documents of historical value in the recess of the granite structure; two original hymns were sung, and all the solemnities of the day awakened a fresh interest in the man, who had been known and loved by four generations of the town.

Digitized by Google

# SERMONS.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

# CONTENTS OF THE SERMONS.

SERMON I. CHRIST THE STANDARD OF PREACHING. . Page 1

The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.—John 7 : 46.

SERMON II. MINISTERS THANKFUL FOR THEIR OFFICE. . . 16

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.—1 Timothy 1 : 12.

SERMON III. THE GOSPEL A SCHEME OF GRACE. . . . 33

To testify the Gospel of the grace of God.—Acts 20 : 24.

SERMON IV. COUNSEL OF GOD. . . . . 50

For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.—Acts 20 : 27.

SERMON V. MINISTERS WHOLLY GIVEN TO THEIR WORK. . 67

Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them.—1 Timothy 4 : 15.

SERMON VI. GOD INCOMPREHENSIBLE TO HIS CREATURES. . 87

Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?—Job 11 : 7.

SERMON VII. A WISE PREACHER AIMS TO MOVE HIS HEARERS. 105

The words of the wise are as goads.—Eccl. 12 : 11.

SERMON VIII. FAITHFUL MINISTERS SEEK THE SALVATION OF THEIR PEOPLE. . . . . 121

For I seek not yours, but you.—2 Cor. 12 : 14.

SERMON IX. MINISTERS EXPOSED TO CORRUPTION BY THEIR PEOPLE. . . . . 135

But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee: Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house.—Ezek. 2 : 8.

SERMON X. PURPOSE OF REDEMPTION. . . . . 152

To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.—Eph. 3 : 10, 11.



Digitized by Google

SERMON XI. DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL THE FOOD OF CHRISTIANS. . . . . 170

I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. — 1 Cor. 3 : 2.

SERMON XII. PAUL'S METHOD OF PREACHING. . . . . 189

Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. — Acts 20 : 21.

SERMON XIII. CONFIRMATION IN THE DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL AN EFFECT OF DIVINE GRACE. . 207

Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace. — Heb. 13 : 9.

SERMON XIV. BOLDNESS OF FAITHFUL PREACHERS. . . 222

And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. — Eph. 6 : 19, 20.

SERMON XV. RECONCILIATION OF SINNERS TO GOD. . . 236

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God. — 2 Cor. 5 : 20.

SERMON XVI. THE ESSENTIAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN SAINTS AND SINNERS. . . . . 250

And if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth. — Jer. 15 : 19.

SERMON XVII. MINISTERIAL FIDELITY. . . . . 266

The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. — Jer. 23 : 28.

SERMON XVIII. RELIGIOUS RESOLUTION. . . . . 279

Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded. — 2 Chron. 15 : 7.

SERMON XIX. UNITY OF SENTIMENT . . . . . 297

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. — 1 Cor. 1 : 10.

SERMON XX. SYSTEMATIC KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOSPEL. . 315

Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me. — 2 Tim. 1 : 13.

Digitized by Google

# SERMON I.

## CHRIST THE STANDARD OF PREACHING.

PREACHED AT THE INSTALLATION OF REV. CALEB ALEXANDER TO THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE CHURCH IN MENDON, APRIL 12, 1786.

---

The officers answered, Never man spake like this man.—John 7: 46.

LONG before the Messiah made his appearance in our nature, it was foretold by the Spirit of prophecy that he should sustain the office of a preacher. Isaiah speaks of him as announcing his divine mission, to preach the joyful news of the gospel to all penitent, broken-hearted sinners. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God." On the ground of this and other prophecies, the Jews generally expected that the Messiah would appear in the character of a superior preacher. This we learn from what the woman of Samaria said to Christ. "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things." This general expectation of the Jews, Christ did by no means disappoint; for having lived about thirty years in the obscurity of private life, he submitted to the rite of baptism, by which he was inaugurated into his office and duly prepared to preach the gospel.

As soon as he appeared in the character of a preacher, he



Digitized by Google

drew the attention of the admiring multitudes, who hung upon his lips, and sensibly felt the heavy truths which, with surprising power and pungency, he poured into their minds. His serious and solemn addresses, however, were too pinching and galling to corrupt nature, not to raise the resentment and opposition of the enemies of truth. While therefore some highly applauded his preaching, others secretly murmured and complained, till at length they carried their complaints to the Pharisees and chief priests, who, urged by their own resentment as well as by the importunity of others, immediately "sent officers to take him." The officers, no doubt, were well-pleased with their commission, and secretly rejoiced in the prospect of dragging this disturber of their peace, through crowds of exulting enemies, to the place of public justice. But their raised expectations were soon blasted. For when they came to Christ, who was warmly engaged in preaching the gospel to poor perishing sinners, they found themselves suddenly arrested by the invisible hand of truth, and secretly constrained to renounce their malignant purpose, and to return to those who sent them, with the painful conviction of the irresistible power and energy of this more than human preacher. "The officers answered, Never man spake like this man."

But how did Christ preach, or what did he say, to make such deep impressions on those who had firmly resolved to resist and oppose the truth? This question, especially at this time, justly deserves particular attention, and naturally leads us to exhibit the character of Christ as a preacher of the gospel.

Whether Christ was superior to all other men in his personal appearance and his natural powers of persuasion, we shall not pretend to conjecture, since nothing is said concerning these in the sacred oracles. We shall only mention some of his most distinguishing excellences as a preacher of the gospel, which may be fairly collected from the inspired writers who have given us the history of his life and character.

First, Christ was a *plain* preacher. A plain preacher is one who has clear and distinct ideas in his own mind, and who conveys them to the minds of his hearers in plain language. Such a preacher was Christ. His own ideas lay clear and distinct in his own mind. He was master of every subject upon which he preached. He understood the whole system of divinity. He

Digitized by Google

was a member of the council of peace, who devised the plan of redemption. He was acquainted with the whole character and whole counsel of God. He was mighty in the Scriptures, and understood every passage of divine inspiration. He had a thorough knowledge of the frame and constitution of the human mind, and comprehended at one view all the characters, circumstances, and connections of mankind, through every period of their existence. And as these views were perfectly clear and familiar to his own mind, so he was able to express himself upon any subject with the greatest ease and perspicuity, and to exhibit every divine truth in a plain, unstudied style, which is not only intelligible, but agreeable to persons of every character and capacity. Sensible that figurative language is the voice of nature, and best adapted to explain and illustrate whatever is dark and obscure, he made a free use of images; which spread much light and perspicuity upon all the subjects he handled. He borrowed his images, however, not from music, painting, poetry, or any of the arts which are confined to the learned few; but from the most familiar appearances and productions of nature, which lie open and common to every observer. In the temple, he used those similitudes which were naturally suggested by the various objects there. At Jacob's well, he drew his metaphors from the qualities of water. In the open air, he explained his meaning by the motions of the wind. At seed-time, he borrowed his images from the sower; at harvest, from the reaper; and in the Spring, from the birds of the air, the blooming flowers, and the opening foliage. These images he used, not for the sake of decorating his style, or embellishing his subject, but for the more important purpose of enlightening and impressing the minds of his hearers. He chose his words, his figures, and all his modes of expression, with no other view than to be easily and clearly understood; and in that respect, he was the plainest preacher in the world. Hence we are told, what it is natural to suppose and believe, "the common people heard him gladly."

Secondly, Christ was a *searching* preacher. He aimed directly at the hearts of those to whom he preached. For this he had a superior advantage. He knew the heart. He was able, therefore, on every occasion when the multitudes flocked to hear him preach, to speak to the heart of each individual. This

Digitized by Google

gave to his preaching irresistible force and energy. He described the hearts, and thoughts and characters of men so exactly, that while they heard him preach they felt their whole souls lie open and naked before an all-seeing eye, which they could neither deceive nor escape. In short, he made his hearers feel as men will feel at the day of judgment. This perhaps was the case with respect to the officers. He knew their characters and all their secret intentions; and probably, in some part of his discourse, he took occasion to describe and expose just such characters and views as they were conscious to themselves were their own, which made them feel and say, "Never man spake like this man." This however is certain, that he generally preached according to the peculiar knowledge he had of the human heart; which enabled him to enter into every man's bosom, and search the inmost recesses of his soul. Hence we read, "Jesus, knowing their hearts," "knowing their thoughts," or "knowing their hypocrisy," said this, or that, which was the most directly calculated to hit their real characters, and present views and feelings. The inspired writers furnish us with a variety of instances of this nature. His sermon on the mount immediately occurs. Nothing could be better adapted than that was, to search the hearts and expose the characters and conduct of the shining Pharisees, who, neglecting all inward, vital piety, placed the whole of religion in the bare observance of the outward forms and rites of divine worship. As he was preaching to "certain that trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others," he spake the parable of the publican and pharisee, which was directly suited to humble and abase such proud and conceited hypocrites. When a rich young man very respectfully put this question to him, "Good master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" he directed him to keep the commandments, and sell all that he had and give to the poor. This answer exactly reached his case, carried conviction to his conscience, and drew tears from his eyes. At another time, one of the company, where he was present, desired him to speak to his brother to divide the inheritance between them; but instead of replying to his words, he replied to his heart, by reading him a solemn lecture upon covetousness and worldly-mindedness, in the parable of the rich fool, who lost his soul by the love of the

Digitized by Google

world. Though he tenderly respected Martha, yet when she complained of her sister's conduct, he severely reproved her own. When he perceived the thoughts of his disciples, who had been cherishing ambitious views respecting their relation to him as the promised Messiah, he introduced a little child before them, to convince them of their sin and folly, and to teach them to maintain and cultivate a more meek and humble spirit. And knowing the character of those who desired his opinion concerning the woman taken in adultery, he said unto them, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." This pointed answer stung them with guilt and remorse, and therefore we are told that they, "being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last."

Christ never drew a bow at a venture, but always directed the arrows of truth to the hearts of his hearers. He described the character of the saint, and the character of the sinner, with so much truth and propriety, that every person might easily distinguish the one from the other, and know which belonged to himself. Nay, he did more than this; for he directed every man's eyes inward, and obliged him by the light of truth to see and feel his own character. This is that peculiar excellence in preaching, for which, the finest encomium, perhaps, ever bestowed on a preacher, was given by Louis XIV. to the eloquent Bishop of Clermount, Father Massillon. After hearing him preach at Versailles, he said to him, "Father, I have heard many great orators in this chapel; I have been highly pleased with them; but for you, whenever I hear you, I go away displeased with myself; for I see more of my own character."

Thirdly, Christ was a *sentimental* preacher. His sermons were replete with sentiment. He fed his hearers with knowledge and understanding. He delivered plain, heavy, interesting truths, which not only enlighten the mind, but find the nearest passage to the heart. Though there was a rich variety in his preaching, yet he chiefly insisted on those peculiar doctrines of the gospel which are the most disagreeable to corrupt nature; and which, perhaps, for that reason alone, have often been called obscure and deep points of mere speculation.

That Christ was a sentimental preacher, we need no other evidence than his public discourses. He plainly taught the



Digitized by Google

doctrine of the sacred Trinity, which supports the scheme of redemption, and lies interwoven with the capital doctrines of the gospel. He said that he and his Father were one; that he was in the Father, and the Father in him; and that the Holy Ghost proceeded from both. He insisted, however, principally on his own divinity, which was so essential to his character as the Saviour of sinners. He said, "Before Abraham was, I am." He said, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in heaven." And he called God his Father, in such a sense as plainly implied, and was understood to mean, that he was equal to God in every divine perfection. He inculcated the doctrine of personal election to eternal life, as a truth of great practical importance. He spoke of the elect, as those whom his Father had given him; as those for whom, in a particular sense, he laid down his life; and as those whom no impostor could seduce, and whom God himself would avenge. Indeed it was a familiar expression with him, "Many are called, but few are chosen." Divine sovereignty was another delightful theme of his preaching. He delivered a sermon upon this subject, in the congregation of Nazareth, which, with its remarkable effects, we find recorded in the fourth chapter of Luke. And this doctrine was so agreeable to his own heart, that, upon seeing a bright and glorious display of it, he broke out into a rapture of praise, and said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

He urged the absolute necessity of disinterested love upon all his followers, as the essence of true religion, and as that alone which discriminates the characters of the children of God. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do

Digitized by Google

ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

That mankind by nature are totally destitute of this disinterested love, and wholly governed by the opposite spirit of selfishness, he abundantly taught in the course of his preaching. "I know you," said he to sinners, "that ye have not the love of God in you." And he scrupled not to call them vipers, and serpents, and even the children of the devil. And he carried the doctrine of total depravity into its natural and necessary consequences, and condemned sinners for all the affections of their hearts, and all the actions of their lives.

Accordingly, upon this ground, he asserted the absolute necessity of regeneration, or the renovation of the heart by the Spirit of God. He expressly said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And when Nicodemus appeared to misapprehend his meaning, he rejoined, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." And in full consistency with this, he commanded sinners to repent and believe the gospel immediately. Accordingly we read, "After that John was put in prison, Jesus came from Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."

He assured all his faithful followers that they should finally persevere to eternal life. "Verily, verily I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation." Again, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

I might proceed to mention the doctrines of a general, and of a particular providence; and the duties of self-denial, unconditional submission, and universal obedience to the divine commands; all which Christ plainly taught from time to time in

Digitized by Google

his public discourses. But I shall only add that he absolutely asserted, in the plainest terms, the endless punishment of those who die in impenitence and unbelief. In this respect, he brought life and immortality to light, and discovered more of the invisible scenes of the invisible world, than had been ever discovered before by any of the teachers sent from God. Thus the words which Christ spoke, the doctrines which he delivered, they were life, and they were death, and the same that shall judge the world at the last day; and therefore he eminently deserves the character of a sentimental preacher. This naturally leads me to observe,

In the last place, that Christ was a *moving* preacher. He is the most moving preacher, and possesses the power of persuasion to the highest degree, who is best able to convey his own views and feelings to the minds of his hearers. No speaker can effect, nor even desire to effect, more than this. Were a criminal to plead for his own life, he could desire to do no more than convey his own views and feelings to the mind of his judge. This Christ was able to do; and by doing this, he was able to move the minds of his hearers with whatsoever affections or passions he wished to excite. He had clear views and warm feelings. He was perfectly acquainted with God, with heaven, with hell, with the nature and worth of the human soul, and with all its relations and connections both in time and eternity. All his affections were pure and clear as the crystal stream. His heart was a flame of love. His soul was all sensibility. His life was immaculate innocence. And more of heaven sat on his countenance, and sparkled in his eye, than ever shone in the face of Moses, or the face of Stephen. With such views, such feelings, such heavenly appearance, could he possibly fail of speaking with astonishing solemnity and pathos? We never heard him preach, and we never shall; but we may conceive of his rising up in a large assembly of poor, guilty, perishing sinners, and, like a mighty stream, bearing down all before him, while he clearly, solemnly and affectionately laid open his own views and feelings respecting their guilt and danger, their happiness and misery to all eternity. What could equal the language of his vengeance to secure, hardened sinners? "Wo unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers." "Ye serpents!

Digitized by Google

ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" But what could be more soft and melting than the language of his love? "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." In reference to these words, the officers said — and who would not have said the same? — "Never man spake like this man." Such a plain, searching, sentimental, moving preacher was Christ, who is the standard of perfection, and the pattern of preaching to all who assume the ministerial character.

But if this be true, how can those answer it to Christ, who profess to be his ministers, and to preach his gospel, and yet pay no regard to his example in their preaching? Have not such persons crept into the ministry, from age to age? Did not some preachers begin to make shipwreck of the faith, while the apostles were alive? Did they not wax worse and worse soon after their death? Did not some deny even the Lord that bought them, and maintain that he was a mere creature, a mere man, a mere phantom? Did not the body of the clergy, in the dark ages of Christianity, mix and corrupt the plainest truths of divine revelation with the vain philosophy which they borrowed from the school of Alexandria, or the academy of Plato, till scarce a single article of the gospel was left pure and unadulterated?

But, to come more home, Do the sermons of some at this day contain one sentiment delivered by Christ in his sermon on the mount, or in any other of his public discourses? Might we not hear them preach from year to year, without perceiving the least resemblance between their sermons and his, either in matter or spirit? Nay, do not some plainly preach against the sentiments which Christ delivered? Do they not preach against the revealed mode of the divine existence; against the divinity of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost; against the doctrine of election and divine sovereignty; against disinterested love and total depravity; and against regeneration, saints' perseverance, and the interminable punishment of those who die in their sins? Do not such ministers preach against Christ, and the souls of men? And are they not workers together with the god of this world, in blinding the minds of them that believe not?

Digitized by Google

How then can they answer this to Christ at the day of judgment, when the truths which he preached, and which they denied, shall shine forth in all their lustre and awful importance? How will they feel, when the immortal souls whom they have been the means of destroying forever, shall bitterly upbraid and reproach them for their infidelity, unfaithfulness, and cruelty? What excuse can they make? Can they plead ignorance? Did they not live with the gospel in their hands, and the example of Christ before their eyes? Was it not the proper business of their lives to search the Scriptures, to study the mind and will of Christ, to imbibe his spirit, and imitate his example both in living and in preaching? How therefore could they be ignorant, unless it were owing to stupidity, indolence, selfishness and blindness of heart? And will they not be obliged to confess, with shame and confusion of face, that they did seek their own things rather than the things of Christ; and did endeavor more to please men than to be the servants of Christ?

We may be very certain how Christ will treat corrupt and unfaithful ministers at the last day, from the manner of his treating such persons here on earth. He treated them with more severity than any other order of men. His love to God and precious souls seemed to inflame his indignation against corrupt preachers. He stigmatized them as blind leaders of the blind; as those who took away the key of knowledge; as those who shut up the kingdom of heaven against men, neither going in themselves, nor suffering them that were entering to go in; as wolves in sheep's clothing; and as thieves and robbers, who come on purpose to steal and kill and destroy his flock. Against such he denounces the severest anathemas. "Wo unto you lawyers! wo unto you scribes and Pharisees!" Hence, of all men in the world, corrupt and unfaithful ministers may justly expect to meet with the heaviest frowns from the face of Christ, their injured and incensed Lord and Master, at the day of judgment.

Again: How can those people answer it to Christ, who will not receive his faithful ministers who follow his example and preach the same truths which he preached? The experience of ages shows that mankind have generally refused to give a proper reception to the ambassadors of Christ. Men naturally hate the light, and will not come to it, lest their deeds should

Digitized by Google

be reproved. Therefore they feel an aversion to those preachers who exhibit the light, and inculcate the soul-humbling truths of the gospel. This, perhaps, they never so fully manifested as by their treatment of Christ while he tabernacled in flesh, and preached the truth with superior power and pungency. We hear of no opposition to Christ till after he commenced a preacher; but then they employed every opprobrious epithet to asperse his character. They said he was mad, and had a devil. They said he was a friend of publicans and sinners. They said he was a disturber of the peace, and a blasphemer of God. But all this hatred and obloquy arose from no other cause, than his plain and faithful preaching. He testified of the world that their deeds were evil. He declared that what is highly esteemed among men, is an abomination in the sight of God. He unmasked sinners, and exposed their real characters to view. This they could not endure. Accordingly they accused, condemned and crucified him, for telling them the truth. And as Christ knew that human nature would be the same in every age, and operate in the same manner under the same circumstances, so he forewarned his faithful ministers to expect the same treatment from the world, that he had met with from it. "Ye shall be hated of all men, for my name's sake." "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" Has not this prophecy been constantly fulfilling? Does not the truth of it appear at this day? Will men now endure sound doctrine? Will they hear those ministers who tell them the truth, search their hearts, and clearly and faithfully lay open their true characters? Will vacant congregations, generally, receive and choose a preacher, who, agreeably to the spirit and example of Christ, inculcates disinterested love, total depravity, divine sovereignty, and the other distinguishing and cardinal doctrines of the gospel? Will even churches, who are the professed friends of Christ, embrace and defend the same truths which he preached and maintained at the risk of his life? And are not people very generally saying to the seers, see not, and to the prophets, prophesy smooth things; and joining hand in hand, to prevent the admission of such ministers among them as make Christ the pattern and standard of their preaching?

Digitized by Google

But how will people be able to answer this before the bar of Christ? Will they be able to plead ignorance? Hath not Christ given them his own character as a preacher, to direct them in the choice of ministers? Hath he not solemnly warned them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and to avoid all false teachers as wolves in sheep's clothing? Hath he not expressly told them that he shall consider their opposition to the truth, and to his faithful ministers, as opposition to himself? "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me." Churches, congregations and individuals therefore, who are conscious to themselves that they have been guilty of rejecting and abusing Christ, by rejecting, opposing and abusing his faithful ministers, have reason to tremble in the prospect of standing before the judgment-seat of Christ. Except they repent, they may read their own doom in the character and fate of Capernaum, Chorazin and Bethsaida; or rather in the character and tremendous destruction of the whole Jewish nation, who stoned the prophets, crucified Christ, and rejected both his gospel and ministers.

Once more: Will not this subject teach all ministers why they preach no more like Christ? Is not this, in a great measure, owing to their living no more like Christ? A minister's life must have influence upon his preaching. To preach well, it is necessary to live well. To preach like Christ, it is necessary to live like Christ. Christ lived the minister. He carried the minister into all companies. He conversed freely, indeed, with publicans and sinners; but yet was a companion only of them who feared the Lord. He kept his heart and his lips with all diligence, and never said or did the least thing out of character. He was harmless and undefiled, and maintained the awful authority of innocence. He was meek and lowly in spirit, and when he was reviled, he reviled not again. He sought not the riches, honors, or pleasures of the world, but by self-denial lived above them all. He lost no time by sloth, or vain amusements, but indefatigably pursued his Father's business. He loved the ministry, and gave himself wholly to it, and relied upon Providence alone for all needful supplies. He allowed none of the vanities of time to employ his thoughts, but kept all his views and affections fixed steadily on the great object of eternity. He spent days and nights in prayer. He

Digitized by Google

lived habitually in devotion and communion with God. In short, he lived religion; he lived in heaven; and exemplified his doctrines and preaching, by his own heavenly and devout life.

Now if we who profess to be his followers and ministers, should live as he lived, should we not more likely preach as he preached? Would not such a life transfuse a spirit, an energy into our preaching, which would surprisingly arrest the hearts and consciences of our hearers? Would it not give us a fervor, a solemnity in all our private and public discourses, which nothing could gainsay or resist? Should we not speak as having authority, and not as the Scribes? Why then do we not live so? Are we not bound as men, as Christians, and especially as ministers of Christ, to live such a life? And unless we do this, is there any prospect of our fulfilling our ministerial vows and engagements? We have engaged to preach like Christ, in matter and spirit. We have bound ourselves to adopt every article in his creed, and to preach, as far as we know, every sentiment which he preached, though at the hazard of our interest, reputation and lives. But shall we have love, resolution and self-denial enough to carry us through such trials, unless we imbibe the spirit, and copy the life of Christ? O! let us then live better that we may preach better, and die better, and be better prepared to meet our people at the bar of Christ; where we must shortly stand upon a level with the lowest in the flock, and receive that final sentence from the mouth of the great Bishop of souls, which will either wring our hearts with despair, or fill them with a flood of joy.

I hope, my dear brother, you will let these thoughts sink deep into your heart, at this serious moment. Permit me to remind you that you are to make Christ the great pattern, end and object of your preaching. Endeavor, therefore, to live and pray and preach like Christ. He is this day sending you to preach to this people in his own room, and committing the eternal interests of their precious souls to your care and charge. For Christ's sake, be faithful to your trust. If any of this flock are scattered, or lost, or perish by a famine of the word, their blood will be required at your hand. Remember that Christ, your Lord and Master, will keep his eye upon you, and watch you every moment. He will be with you in the study,



Digitized by Google

and observe you in your private preparations. He will attend you to the pulpit, and hear you preach. He will sit with you at his table, and observe your behavior at the head of his family; and he will accompany you among the people, and mark all your conversation and carriage against the day of judgment. Let Christ, then, be always in your eye and in your heart. Converse with him, consult him, and engage that gracious presence of his, which he hath promised to all his faithful ministers. Often ask yourself, how would Christ preach? how would Christ live? how would Christ converse? how would Christ behave under this trial, or that trial? how would he treat this church and congregation, were he in my place and situation? and always aim to follow the example of Christ, both in living and in preaching. Only do this, dear brother, and be assured you shall meet your whole flock at the last day with joy; and be "unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish."

The church and congregation in this place will permit me to ask them, in this serious connection, whether they are willing to receive a plain, searching, faithful minister of the gospel. Such a minister, we really hope you are this day to receive from the great Head of the church. And should he prove to be of this character, he will do great execution here, and fit every one of you for heaven or hell. It is a serious and important circumstance to have a minister of Christ live among you, whose presence will resemble the presence of Christ; who will exhibit religion before your eyes wherever you see him; who will teach you, by example, what it is to live for eternity; who will put vice and irreligion to the blush, and strike an awe upon the mind of every secure and thoughtless sinner; and who will, from Sabbath to Sabbath, lay open the blackness, turpitude and malignity of the human heart; and bring God near to you, and you near to God; and make you feel that there is but one alternative before you, either to believe and be saved, or to refuse and be damned. You will, moreover, please to lay it up in your minds, that your treatment of such a minister will be considered as your treatment of Christ himself. If you love him, you will love Christ; if you are kind to him, you will be kind to Christ; if you hear him, you will hear Christ; and if you receive him, you will receive Christ. But if you despise him,

Digitized by Google

you will despise Christ; if you abuse him, you will abuse Christ; if you reject him, you will reject Christ; and one day know, to your cost, that there has been a minister of Christ among you.

In a word, let me say to this whole assembly, Take heed how ye hear. Serious and eternal are the consequences of your living under the preaching of the faithful ministers of Christ. You may indeed be able to despise and reject the solemn messages which they bring to you from Sabbath to Sabbath, till the day of grace and space of repentance are no more. But you will not be able to despise the voice of Christ, who, on earth, spoke as never man spake; and who, at the day of judgment, will speak as he never spoke before, and say to all impenitent gospel sinners, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish!"

Digitized by Google

# SERMON II.

## MINISTERS THANKFUL FOR THEIR OFFICE.

INSTALLATION OF THE REVEREND DAVID AVERY, TO THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE IN THE CHURCH IN WRENTHAM, MAY 25, 1786.

---

**And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry. — 1 Timothy 1: 12.**

MANY of those favored persons, whom Christ has employed as signal instruments of promoting his wise and gracious designs, have been raised up and qualified for his service, in a manner very unexpected, both to themselves and to the world. The Lord Jesus raised up Joseph, Moses and David, and prepared them for the noble and important parts which they had to act upon the stage of life, by a series of surprising and mysterious causes and events. But the most remarkable instance of this nature that we find in all the sacred pages, is the great apostle Paul. Christ, by a miracle of grace, took him out of the kingdom and service of Satan, and employed him in promoting and defending that glorious cause, which, just before, he had been laboring with all his might to overthrow and destroy. And this wise and gracious conduct of Christ so deeply affected his heart, that he could never speak of it without the warmest gratitude, and the highest expressions of admiration and praise. "By the grace of God I am what I am." "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." And "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who



Digitized by Google

hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." This text, without any comment, plainly implies that those whom Christ furnishes for the ministry, are thankful for their office.

We shall, therefore, first show that Christ furnishes men for the ministry; and then suggest several reasons, why those whom Christ furnishes for the ministry are thankful for their office.

It belongs to Christ, as the Governor of the world, and as the Head of the church, to raise up and qualify men for the service of the sanctuary. This Paul more than intimates in the words of the text. And everywhere in the New Testament, ministers are represented as the servants and ambassadors of Christ, and as his peculiar, ascension gifts to the church. Christ is said to give not only apostles and prophets and evangelists, but also pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, and for the work of the ministry. Hence we may justly consider Christ as forming and qualifying, as well as authorizing, all his own ministers, in every age of the church.

The weakest eye is capable of discerning a great diversity in the characters of men, as to their natural powers and abilities. This difference, indeed, sometimes appears almost equal to that which draws the line of distinction between us and the various tribes of sensitive natures. Solomon, Socrates, and Newton, to name no more, differed as much from some of the lowest of our own species, as one star differs from another star in glory. But all this diversity of intellectual furniture originates from Christ, who endows mankind with various abilities, according to the various services in which he designs to employ them. Some men he means to employ in preaching the gospel, and for that reason, enriches their minds with such distinguishing qualities, as he knows the importance of their office justly requires. Paul, we are told, was a chosen vessel. Christ always meant to make him a minister. He raised him up to preach the gospel among the heathen nations. And, accordingly, we find that he endowed him with those superior powers and talents which were equal to his superior office; and which, in the eye of the prince of critics, gave him a rank among the celebrated orators of Greece and Rome. By this instance of his conduct, Christ has plainly told us, that in his view there is no station



Digitized by Google

nor employment of life which requires better natural abilities than the ministerial office. Nor can we conceive that any one should need a clear perception, a penetrating judgment, a lively imagination, and all the powers of persuasion, more than a minister of the gospel; whose business it is to understand, to explain, and to enforce, the deep things of God which carry life or death to every hearer. Christ, therefore, who always acts with infinite wisdom and propriety in adapting means to ends, bestows a large portion of intellectual furniture upon those whom he forms for the great and arduous work of preaching the gospel.

But the noblest powers of nature stand in need of the nurturing hand of education. The uninstructed mind resembles the unpolished diamond, before the artificer's hand has given the finishing stroke to display its sparkling beauties. Sensible, therefore, of the happy influence of instruction to strengthen and enlarge, as well as to soften and refine the opening powers of the mind, Christ has taken particular care from age to age, that those whom he designs for great and extensive service in his church and kingdom, should enjoy the benefit of a learned education. As he raised up Paul to be a pillar of the church, and a principal instrument of spreading the gospel through the world, so, in order to furnish him for this great and arduous work, he brought him up at the feet of Gamaliel, the most noted and learned Rabbi in the Jewish nation. And no doubt Paul improved his time to the best advantage, and acquired a large stock of that human knowledge, which he found to be of eminent service to him afterwards, in preaching the gospel, and opening the great truths of divine revelation. I know, indeed, Dr. Campbell conjectures that he derived most of his learning from the Jewish Rabbis, who taught mere fables, traditions, and endless genealogies, which could be of no great service to a preacher of the gospel. But, if we only consider that he was born in the famous city of Tarsus; that there, probably, he spent his younger years in the study of the sciences; that he went into Judea merely to finish his education, and gain a more thorough knowledge of the religious sentiments of his own nation; that he was well acquainted with the heathen poets, and able to quote them with beauty and propriety; and that he disputed with the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers in

Digitized by Google

the city of Athens, which, as the seat of learning and of learned men, was called the eye of Greece; I say, if we only consider these things, we must conclude that Christ furnished him with large measures of human, as well as divine knowledge, to qualify him to preach the gospel in every part of the world. But besides Paul, we may mention many others, whom Christ has formed for his more immediate and special service by means of a public education. He educated Moses in the court of Pharaoh. He educated Samuel in the house of the Lord in Shiloh. He educated David in the court of Saul. He educated Solomon in the court of David. He educated the prophets in the schools of Samuel, of Elijah, and of Elisha, which were at Bethel, Jericho, and Gilgal. He educated Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah in the academy in the city of Babylon. And to supply the defect of a learned education in the apostles and primitive ministers of the gospel, he miraculously endowed them not only with the gift of tongues, but also with the superior gifts of knowledge and of wisdom. These instances plainly show that Christ is a friend to learning, and that he commonly makes use of it to qualify men for eminent service in his spiritual kingdom.

But, besides all these powers and improvements of nature, he also communicates his own spirit to his ministers, and makes them like minded with himself. For this is one of his invariable maxims, "He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." He views every natural man as a real enemy to his cause and kingdom; and therefore totally unfit to preach the gospel, until he has experienced a saving change, and become heartily united to his person and interest. Of this, we have a clear and striking instance in the apostle Paul. Before his conversion, notwithstanding all his shining qualities and literary improvements, he was, "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," and fit to be the minister of Satan only, in whose cause and service he was most heartily engaged. Christ therefore appeared to him as he was going to Damascus, and struck conviction into his conscience, laid open the plague of his heart, destroyed his false hopes, and raised him from spiritual death to spiritual life. And this divine change sanctified all his natural and acquired abilities, directed them to their proper use and end.

Digitized by Google

united his heart to the cause of truth, and inspired him with holy zeal and fortitude to spread the triumphs of the cross in the face of a frowning world. Thus a good capacity, a good education, and a good heart, are the noble qualifications which Christ bestows upon those whom he raises up, and employs in the sacred work of the gospel ministry.

We shall now, in the second place, as proposed, suggest several reasons why the ministers of Christ are thankful for their office.

The first reason to be given is this; that the ministerial office bears a favorable aspect upon a life of religion and vital piety. The ministers of Christ hunger and thirst after righteousness, and desire to perfect holiness in the fear of God. They are thankful, therefore, for that employment which serves to advance, rather than to obstruct, their progress in the Christian and divine life. In this respect, we find a difference among the various callings which divine providence requires various persons to pursue. Some useful and necessary employments seem rather unfavorable to piety and devotion, and throw obstacles in the way of that habitual intercourse and communion with God, which every Christian ardently desires to maintain and improve. The common business of merchants, of farmers, of mechanics, is apt to engross their attention and divert their minds from divine objects, and leave them too little time and inclination for the secret duties of devotion. Some, who go down to the sea in ships, and others, who jeopard their lives in the high places of the field, lament the loss of those divine ordinances and numerous aids to piety which they once enjoyed in the more retired and silent scenes of life. And the pious physician painfully feels the embarrassments of his calling, which so often rob him of his happiest hours in the closet and in the family, as well as in the house of God.

But the minister of Christ is freed from all these obstructions to piety by the nature of his office, which gives him time, retirement, and all the means of secret, private, and public devotion. His main work is the proper food of a pious heart, and serves to nourish and strengthen every holy and religious affection. His daily business calls him to retirement, and in that retirement to commune with God and his own heart, to search the Scriptures, and meditate upon the glorious objects of eternity.

Digitized by Google

His public office leads him to the house of God, and there to take the most active and animating part in the public exercises of religion. His own discourses, which should always flow warm from his own heart, give him an opportunity of deriving the largest portion of spiritual instruction, from every subject upon which he descants in public. His duty calls him to the house of mourning, and to the chambers of the sick and of the dying; where all the feelings of benevolence, of compassion and of friendship, are naturally awakened and improved. His duty also carries him among lively Christians, among mourning saints, and distressed sinners; where the beauties of religion, the worth of souls, and the presence of God, serve to solemnize his mind, and to warm his heart with devout and heavenly affections. Besides all this, the peculiar difficulties which attend his office, yield him a fair opportunity of improving his mind in some of the most amiable of the Christian graces. The difficulties which he discovers in his studies, the difficulties which he finds in discoursing with his people under a great variety of soul concerns, and the difficulties which arise from the blindness, the caprice, and the baser passions of human nature, all unite to lead him to God, and to oblige him to live in the continual exercise of faith and hope, of submission and dependence, of humility and meekness. Paul appears to have made a great proficiency in the school of affliction, and to have derived much benefit from the heavy trials which he underwent in the discharge of his office. He learned in whatever state he was, therewith to be content. And therefore he says, "Most gladly will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong." Hence the apostles, and the primitive ministers of Christ, and those of their successors who have gone through the most fiery trials, have exhibited the most shining characters of practical religion and vital piety. So that the ministry, both by its duties and its trials, is eminently calculated to improve those who are employed in it, in all the branches of the Christian and divine life, and therefore affords them abundant reason to be thankful for their office.

Secondly: The ministers of Christ are thankful for their of-

Digitized by Google

fice, because it gives them peculiar advantages to enrich their minds with useful and divine knowledge. A thirst for knowledge, especially for the knowledge of God and of divine things, always accompanies a good capacity and a good heart. And as these are qualifications of the ministers of Christ, so they are thankful for an office which not only permits, but requires them to incline their ear to wisdom, to cry after knowledge, and to lift up their voice for understanding; to seek her as silver, and to search for her as for hid treasures. It is the unhappy lot of mankind, in general, to pursue employments which confine their whole attention to a very small number of low and sensible objects, and thereby prevent the cultivation and refinement of all their nobler powers and faculties. But the ministerial office gives a free scope to the excursions of the mind, and opens a wide field for intellectual pleasures and improvements. The divine may walk with historians, metaphysicians and philosophers as far as they go, and then pass on to regions beyond the circle of their acquaintance. For they confine their researches to the laws and works of nature, which are objects that were born with time, which live with time, and which shall die when time dies. But his business leads him out of time into eternity, carries him back to endless ages before creation began, and pushes him forward to interminable ages beyond the judgment day; and requires him to be acquainted, not only with the works and laws of nature, but also with the God of nature, and his supreme end in all the works and providence of grace. A man therefore might be as great a metaphysician as Locke, as great a philosopher as Newton, as great a naturalist as Solomon, and yet, in point of the noblest knowledge, fall far below the apostle Paul, who understood the deep things of divine revelation, which alone can explain all the works and ways of the Supreme Being. As it would be of little service to know all the springs and wheels and motions of a watch, without knowing the end for which it was made; so it would be of little service to know the whole machinery and construction of the whole material and intellectual system, without knowing the end for which it was created. Hence it is of more importance to know why things exist, than how they exist; why God has established the laws of nature, than how they operate; why he has made us as we are, than how he made us such. There is no study

Digitized by Google

more agreeable and more useful, than the study of final causes. And this is the study of the divine; to whom it properly belongs to discover the chief end of man, to vindicate the ways of God, and to explore the final cause of things, from the sacred oracles of truth. His business therefore requires him to extend his researches to matters of a higher nature, and of more importance, than those which employ the attention of the sons of science; and so affords him a happy opportunity of feeding his mind with the same glorious truths which angels now desire to look into, and which all holy beings will forever contemplate, with growing ardor and delight. And this is a good reason why he should be thankful for his office. But,

Thirdly: A greater reason is, that it opens before him the largest sphere of usefulness. It is the sincere and ardent desire of a pious heart to be useful. The language of Paul is the language of every real saint: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And the ministerial office appears so adapted to promote the glory of God and the salvation of souls, that perhaps almost every young convert, for a while at least, wishes to be a minister, and thinks that he should be able to convert all the world. So young Melanchthon thought, till painful experience taught him to the contrary. This, however, is certain, that no other employment of life opens so fair a prospect of doing good, as the work of the ministry. A minister has the same opportunities which other men have to be useful in all the common relations and connections of life. He has still an opportunity peculiar to himself, to do good by the insensible and powerful influence of example; because his office places him on such an eminence, and is of such a sacred nature, as naturally to draw the eyes and attention of all to his conduct. It belongs to his office to strengthen the cords of civil society, by condemning vice, by inculcating virtue, and by enforcing the righteous laws of man from the word of God and the motives of eternity. And it is a part of his duty to attend to the rising hopes of his flock, and instil into their young and tender minds the first principles of virtue and wisdom; which lay the broadest foundation for peace and harmony among families, among societies and larger communities. But his widest sphere for usefulness lies in that divine authority with which he is invested, to bear the messages of God to men, and teach them those great and important truths

Digitized by Google

by which they may become wise to salvation. By virtue of this authority, Paul became so extensively useful in the first age of Christianity. When Christ appeared to him to put him into office, he addressed him in such serious and animating language as this: "Rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." This was as much as to say, "Go, and be my instrument of converting thousands of immortal souls, who are now perishing for lack of knowledge; that they may be delivered from the power of Satan, and from the dominion of sin, and restored to the favor of God, and set up as the everlasting monuments of free and sovereign grace." All this good, we have reason to believe that Paul was actually the means of promoting, by fulfilling the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus. Where then shall we find another such instance of extensive usefulness? Joseph, who saved two nations from temporal ruin, was a useful man; Moses, who led the people of God through seas and swords and plagues to the borders of Canaan, was a useful man; David, who served God and his generation upon the throne of Israel, was a useful man; and Solomon, who built, for the honor and service of God, the most grand and elegant temple that the sun ever beheld, was a useful man. But I appeal to all who have read of the labors of Paul, and the fruits of his ministry, whether he was not the means, in the hand of Christ, of diffusing much greater, much nobler, and much more permanent happiness among his fellow-creatures, than Joseph or Moses, than David or Solomon, or than any other man before or since. Hence Paul was so thankful for the ministry, and so willing to live and preach the gospel, even while he longed for heaven, and the immediate presence and enjoyment of Christ. And hence all the ministers of Christ are thankful for the same office, which opens such an extensive field for usefulness in promoting the glory of God in the salvation of sinners. Especially when they consider once more,

Digitized by Google

Fourthly: That their work is of such a nature, as to carry its own present and future reward with it. The ministers of Christ receive no inconsiderable reward as they go along, before their labors and their lives are ended. They enjoy the pleasure which there is, in separating themselves from the world, and intermeddling with all wisdom. They enjoy the benefit which there is, in the effectual and fervent prayers of those who esteem them highly in love, for their work's sake. They enjoy the satisfaction which there is, in observing their people growing in knowledge and grace, under their public and private instructions. And they sometimes enjoy that more noble and divine happiness, which results from the success of their labors in the conversion of sinners, of whom they had travailed in birth till Christ was formed in them. These spiritual children are their reward, while they live and converse with them in this life; they will be their reward when they meet them in heaven; they will be their reward, when they meet them at the day of judgment; and they will be their living and growing reward, from that day forward for ever. Such a prospect as this supported and animated Paul, under all his labors and sufferings in the vineyard of Christ. Hence he writes thus, to those whom he had begotten through the gospel, at Corinth: "For we which live, are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you." "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." "For which cause we faint not." To the same persons he says again in this same epistle, "Ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus." He calls the Philippian converts, his "joy and crown." And, in the pleasing language of raised expectation, he asks the Thessalonians, "What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" How glorious does the apostle now appear in heaven, surrounded with the living fruits of his labors? And how glorious will he appear at the last day, when Christ shall present him and all his spiritual family to the view of the assembled universe, to be each other's joy and crown of rejoicing forever? We are nowhere told what shall be the



Digitized by Google

particular reward of Moses, of Samuel, of David, or of any other eminent servants of God; but we know that Paul's reward shall finally consist in the fruits of his labors in the work of the ministry. His work has carried, and will carry its own reward with it, as long as he and his people shall enjoy the mansions of heaven. Hence he might well say, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." And all the ministers of Christ have the same reason to be thankful for their office, while they are now reaping, and expecting hereafter to reap, such a living and growing reward of their labors, in the salvation of souls.

A few reflections will now conclude the subject.

First: The office of the ministry is the most desirable office in the world. "This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." There is no office that can be more desirable than this. It is every way suited to gratify all the desires of a pious and devout heart. It carries religion, learning, usefulness, and its own divine and permanent reward with it. And it gives the freest scope to the utmost exertions of all the powers and faculties of the soul. The general rebellion of our world has opened the widest field for the ambassadors of Christ, to employ all their gifts and graces in beseeching sinners to become reconciled to God. Every minister of the gospel has a more important cause to plead than ever employed the eloquence of Demosthenes, or Cicero. And if he gain his cause, he not only saves a soul from death, and recovers a subject to God; but also conquers the powers of darkness, and fills the world of light with joy. Besides, his works bear the stamp of immortality, and can receive no injury from the blasting power and influence of age. The works of Raphael and of Hogarth, are every day perishing under the mouldering hand of time. The laws and constitutions of Solon, of Lycurgus, of Numa, are no more. The works of Homer, of Milton, of Shakespeare, are constantly verging toward oblivion. Noah's ark, which was a hundred and twenty years in building, has, for ages and ages, been dissolved in dust. And Solomon's temple, the noblest monument of wealth and of art, has long since been razed to its foundation, and thrown into heaps of ruins. But the works of Paul, those living

Digitized by Google

temples which he raised up, have followed him to heaven; where they still survive the ruins and ravages of time, and grow in beauty as they grow in age. His office, therefore, was a good office; his work a good work. And whoever desires this work, desires the best work that ever employed the head, or heart, or tongue of man. "He that winneth souls is wise;" and he that desireth the office of winning souls, is wise in the choice of his office.

Secondly: The ministerial office needs no foreign aid, to recommend itself to those who are qualified for it. Some are ready to apprehend that the ministry would soon become vacant, if it should once unhappily lose the protection and support of the civil power. Our learned youth, we are told, are turning their attention to law, physic, and merchandise, and but few, and those too not of the most promising parts, are looking forward to the ministry. And what, we are asked, will soon become of the sacred office? Who will desire it under so many worldly embarrassments and disadvantages? Our subject replies, Those who desire a good work for the sake of a good work, and not for the sake of honor, ease, or filthy lucre. The ministerial office will live as long as religion lives, and will be filled with able and faithful men, as long as able and faithful men are in the world. The church has always had the best pastors, when there were no secular advantages to draw men into the ministry, and the worst spiritual guides, when there were the strongest worldly motives to preach the gospel. Hence there is no ground to fear that the ministerial office will ever suffer by being deprived of worldly appendages. The work of the ministry will always recommend itself to able and faithful men, who will esteem it a privilege to plead the cause of Christ, and promote the salvation of sinners. Why did Paul thank Christ for putting him into the ministry? Did the ministry in his day enjoy the smiles and support of the civil magistrate? Or did the office open the road to honor, opulence, or ease? Certainly this was not the case. He chose the ministry, therefore, because it was a good office in its own nature, independent of all human establishments. He often intimates, indeed, that the world called him a fool for his choice. But he thought it sufficient to reply, "Wo is me, if I preach not the gospel."

Digitized by Google

Thirdly: The ministerial office is no burden to the people. One, who calls himself a moral philosopher,* undertakes to prove in the face of stubborn fact, that the people of Israel were utterly unable to support their expensive priesthood. And many, at this day, seem to have the same opinion concerning the ministers of Christ. They look upon the institution as a burden, and wish to be exempted from maintaining such a numerous set of men, whose support costs them, in their view, much more than they are worth. But if there be any weight in this objection, we presume to say that it lies not against the office of the ministry, but against those only who unworthily sustain it. The office requires great and good men to fill it, who are endowed with the richest gifts and graces of Christ, and who are able to instruct the people in things which infinitely concern them as rational and immortal creatures. And though individuals have disgraced their office, yet the ministers of Christ, as a body, have actually done more to enlighten the minds, to restrain the corruptions, and to cultivate the virtues of mankind, than any other order of men in the world. This, every Christian people are obliged to own, and especially the people in New England. We have long sustained, and perhaps in some measure, still sustain the character of a sober, virtuous and religious people. But this, under God, must be chiefly ascribed to the succession of able and faithful ministers, who have planted and watered our churches, and who have so firmly fixed us in the faith once delivered to the saints, that no deceivers have been able to eradicate from our minds the first principles of virtue and religion, or to turn us aside from the fundamental doctrines of divine revelation. We, therefore, have no reason to complain of the ministerial office, from which we have derived, and do still derive such precious and important advantages. But, on the other hand, we have every reason to venerate the divine institution, to esteem the ministers of Christ highly in love for their work's sake, and to give them a support, which is the best suited to render them the most extensively useful.

Fourthly: The ministers of the gospel ought to give themselves wholly to the duties of their office. Do they love their office? Are they thankful for their office? Do they esteem

* Morgan.

Digitized by Google

their office a peculiar privilege? Then surely they ought to exert themselves, with unwearied diligence, in the faithful discharge of all its duties. These are various and important enough to employ all their time and all their abilities. The greatest and best of men have found themselves unequal to the arduous task, and felt themselves ready to sink under the weight of their sacred work. Even Paul was so sensible of the difficulty and importance of ministerial duties, that he cried out, under a deep sense of human weakness, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Ministers have no time to spare for amusements, for diversions, or for the peculiar studies of any other profession than their own. And if they had time, the nature of their office forbids them to dissipate their minds by the cares, the pleasures, or the pursuits of the world. But some, perhaps, may plead necessity for neglecting the duties of their office. This necessity very seldom takes place. Let ministers therefore consider their solemn vows to Christ, and by a faithful discharge of their office, convince their people that they are entirely devoted to their service; and then, if complaints be not removed, their consciences will be eased. This is certainly that course of conduct which Paul directs Timothy, and every other minister of the gospel, to pursue. "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all."

Fifthly, The ministers of the gospel should cheerfully submit to that state of self-denial, in which the nature of their office requires them to live. Their peculiar station deprives them of many worldly enjoyments, and naturally subjects them to a life of self-denial. They have no grounds to expect that honor, that ease, that affluence, or that independence, which attends many other employments of life. These alluring prospects they are called to renounce, and cheerfully submit to more humble and self-denying circumstances. To such a state of humility and self-denial, Christ and the apostles cheerfully subjected themselves, through the whole course of their ministry. Paul, in particular, made great sacrifices to his office, and read-



Digitized by Google

ily submitted to all the scenes of self-denial which he knew would attend the preaching of the gospel. He says, "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." Flesh and blood would naturally say,—Spare thyself, and plunge not into all the dangers and mortifying circumstances, which overwhelm the despised preachers of the cross. But, resisting these solicitations of nature, and yielding to the motions of grace, he resolved to obey the call of Christ, and preach the gospel at the hazard of every worldly interest. This was a signal act of self-denial. For he was a young man of shining talents, and of great expectations; at least, the great men of the nation had fixed their eyes upon him, and had given him a mark of their particular esteem and regard, by granting him a commission to execute a very important design. But all these flattering prospects he cheerfully gave up, for the sake of the ministry. And when he was called to the trial, he made good his resolutions, and courageously endured the afflictions of the gospel. The account of his trials and sufferings, is enough to make the first clergymen in Europe, the prelates of all established churches, and all who sustain the ministerial character, ashamed of themselves, whenever they complain of the burdens of their office. He was "in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews," says he, "five times I received forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I was in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." Yet after all this, in the close of his life he could sincerely say, "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." He always maintained such a grateful sense of the distinguishing privilege of being a minister of the gospel, that he felt as though he could never do or suffer enough, to promote the cause of Christ and the salva-

Digitized by Google

tion of sinners. Surely then, we, who sustain the same office, ought to feel the same spirit, and cheerfully go through all the trials that attend us in the course of our ministry. If we love our office, if we are thankful for it, how readily should we take up the cross, despise the pomp and splendor of the world, and silently walk in the low vale of obscurity, neglect and dependence.

Sixthly: Christ has laid his ministers under the most endearing obligations to be faithful in their office. He has raised them up. He has given them their noble powers and faculties. He has enriched their minds with all their treasures of knowledge and grace. And besides all this, he has put them into the highest and best office in his kingdom. They are bound therefore by their office, by their gifts and graces, and by all the ties of love and gratitude, to preach the gospel with the utmost plainness and fidelity. Paul felt the weight and influence of all these tender motives, and accordingly chose to be the servant of Christ rather than the servant of men, and to displease all the world rather than to displease him who had put him into the ministry. He renounced the hidden things of dishonesty. He walked not in craftiness, nor handled the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, commended himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. In all his epistles, but especially in those to the Romans and Ephesians, he inculcates, without the least palliation or reserve, the doctrine of native depravity, of regeneration, of election, of divine sovereignty, and of divine operation in forming the vessels of mercy and the vessels of wrath. And this faithful discharge of his office, he tells us, gave him peculiar comfort and satisfaction in the nearest views of eternity. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

Now, my Fathers and Brethren, if we are the ministers of Christ, we shall likewise feel the force of these strong and tender obligations, to be faithful in our office. We shall not seek to please men, but we shall seek to please Christ. We shall tell men the truth, even though they should become our enemies for telling them the truth. We shall plainly lay open the

Digitized by Google

depravity and corruption of the human heart. We shall aim to strip sinners of their self-righteousness, and drive them from all their refuges of lies. We shall endeavor to make our hearers understand and feel the most disagreeable, which are indeed the most important and profitable, doctrines of the gospel. And we shall labor to lodge in their consciences as well as in our own, a lasting evidence that, having declared the whole counsel of God, we are pure from the blood of all men.

Seventhly: It is a privilege to hear, as well as to preach the gospel. It was a privilege of the Gentiles to hear Paul, as well as a privilege of Paul to preach to the Gentiles. And it is a privilege of the people now to hear the ministers of Christ, as well as a privilege of the ministers of Christ to preach to the people. Indeed, the opportunity of hearing the gospel is one of the highest privileges that mankind can ever enjoy. What greater privilege can Christ bestow upon any people, than to raise up an able and faithful minister, and furnish him with his richest gifts and graces, and send him among them, "to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God?" This great and invaluable blessing, my hearers, you all enjoy, who enjoy able and faithful ministers. How then will you be able to answer it to Christ at the day of judgment, if you esteem it a burden rather than a privilege, to hear them preach; and from Sabbath to Sabbath, neglect to appear in the house of God, to seek the law at their mouth? You had better misimprove any other day in the week, than misimprove the Sabbath. You had better misimprove seed-time and harvest, than misimprove the precious season of hearing the word of God. You had better absent yourselves from any other place, than from the place of public worship, where God manifests his presence, and displays his pardoning mercy. You had better therefore abuse any other privilege you enjoy, than abuse the privilege of hearing the gospel; for if you abuse this privilege, you will abuse light; which above all things will enhance your guilt, and aggravate your everlasting ruin. For says Christ himself, "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light."

Digitized by Google

# SERMON III.

## THE GOSPEL A SCHEME OF GRACE.*

PREACHED AT THE ORDINATION OF MR. JOHN ROBINSON TO THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE CHURCH IN WESTBOROUGH, JANUARY 14, 1789.

---

To testify the gospel of the grace of God.—Acts 20: 24.

PAUL, in his passage from Greece to Rome, having landed at Miletus, sent and called the elders of the church of Ephesus.

* The author believes that every man has a right to judge for himself in matters of religion; but yet he believes that no man has a right to judge for himself, even in these matters, contrary to the dictates of reason and Scripture. He believes that argument and church discipline are the only proper weapons to be employed against heretics; and absolutely reprobates the cruel and absurd notion of torturing men's bodies, in order to enlighten and convince their minds. He approves the genuine candor which overlooks small errors, and the noble catholicism which embraces truth, in whatever denomination it is found; but he abhors the false and blind charity, which sees no difference between truth and error. He entertains a high opinion of the superior abilities of Mr. Locke, Dr. Price, and Dr. Priestley; he gratefully acknowledges the eminent services they have done to the Republics of Liberty and of Letters; and he especially admires the noble and independent spirit with which they have expressed their sentiments upon some of the most important subjects in divinity. But yet he believes that they have done great and extensive injury to the distinguishing and fundamental doctrines of the gospel; and therefore he wishes to expose, to the utmost of his power, the false and dangerous principles which they have endeavored to establish. And he has no doubt that all who possess their noble and independent spirit, will readily grant that he has neither transgressed the rules of decency, nor violated the laws of Christianity, in attacking their public opinions, while he has treated their characters with all proper deference and respect.



Digitized by Google

When they were come together, he addressed them, with peculiar solemnity and affection, on the important subject of the gospel ministry. And to make the deeper impression on their minds, he not only recalled to their remembrance his former manner of life and preaching among them, but expressed, in the most feeling manner, his present views of the nature and importance of the gospel, which both he and they were under solemn and inviolable obligations to preach. "Ye know," says he, "from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house; testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things which shall befall me there; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, *to testify the gospel of the grace of God.*" In these last words we see the ground upon which the apostle was so much attached to the gospel, and so much engaged to preach it, in the face of every danger. It was because he viewed the gospel as containing and exhibiting the grace of God to our guilty world. Accordingly I shall confine my attention to this single point, that the gospel is a scheme of divine grace.

Though grace is one of the most common words in use, yet it seems necessary, in treating on the subject before us, to fix the meaning of this easy and familiar term. Grace is often used to signify goodness; but this is not the strict and proper sense of the word. For grace is the exercise of love to the guilty; whereas goodness is the exercise of love to the innocent.*

* I do not mean that every exercise of love to the guilty is grace, nor every exercise of love to the innocent, is goodness, in the strictest sense. But what I mean is, that wherever there is goodness in the strictest sense, it consists in love to the innocent; and wherever there is any grace at all, it consists in love to the guilty.

Digitized by Google

Goodness and grace, therefore, immutably differ, as much as guilt and innocence, the objects upon which they finally terminate. And this distinction will forever remain, and be felt in heaven. While angels there will forever drink of the rivers of goodness, saints will forever drink of the rivers of grace. When we say, therefore, that the gospel is a scheme of divine grace, we mean that it is a method which God has devised, to open the way for the free and full display of divine love to the guilty.

Now, if we search the New Testament, we shall find the gospel is everywhere represented as a scheme of divine grace. The angels who brought the news of Christ's birth to the shepherds, were constrained on that occasion, to celebrate the grace of the gospel with the most joyful acclamations. "And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, *good-will towards men.*" This is good-will to the guilty, which is grace in the highest and best sense.

Christ himself, who was equally concerned in devising, and principally concerned in executing the plan of redemption, represents it as a scheme of divine grace. "For," saith he, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." Such love as this to the guilty, is astonishing grace.

The apostle Paul, however, says more concerning the grace of the gospel than any other of the inspired writers. He touches upon this darling theme in all his epistles, and in some he undertakes to prove the gospel to be a scheme of divine grace. In the third chapter of Romans he reasons thus: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." From these premises he brings out this fair and just conclusion, that we are

Digitized by Google

"justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." He continues this train of reasoning to the end of this and of the next chapter, and finally concludes with these strong and striking expressions: "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord." In the second epistle to the Corinthians, after opening the nature and design of the gospel, he represents it as a scheme of divine grace. "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God." "We then as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." By the grace of God here, the apostle evidently means the grace of God displayed in the gospel. He wrote his epistle to the Galatians with a particular design to unfold the genius and spirit of the gospel as a scheme of divine grace. I shall, however, mention but one passage, which breathes the spirit of the whole epistle. "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." By this, the apostle plainly suggests that the gospel is so entirely built upon grace, that if this foundation be once destroyed, the whole gospel is completely frustrated and subverted. In the epistle to the Ephesians, he employs the strongest expressions to celebrate the riches of divine grace displayed in the gospel. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved; in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." He pursues this pleasing subject in the next chapter, and carries the idea of

Digitized by Google

grace as high as language can carry it. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ: (by grace ye are saved:) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us, through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." I might observe that he calls the gospel "the grace of God," "the grace of God in truth," "the dispensation of the grace of God," "the grace of God which bringeth salvation." And I might still further observe, that in the salutations of almost every epistle, the apostles abundantly celebrate the grace of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, displayed in the work of redemption. But without adducing any more passages of Scripture, I shall rest the truth of the doctrine upon the plain texts which I have already cited. These are not loose, independent sentences, but chiefly distinct arguments, linked together in a chain of clear and strong reasoning, by which the apostle demonstrates the gospel to be, in its whole frame and contexture, a scheme of divine grace.

I now beg the patience and attention of my hearers, while I proceed to point out a number of truths, which immediately flow from the nature of the gospel.

1. If the gospel is a scheme of divine grace, then the work of redemption is the most glorious of all the works of God. His works of creation are great and glorious. When he created the world, he made bright displays of his power, wisdom, and goodness. These works, however, gave him no opportunity to display the attribute of grace. And had he continued creating world after world, and system after system, to this day, he might, indeed, have astonished all intelligent beings with the variety and magnitude of his works, but could have made no discovery of his grace, without the work of redemption. This is the only work in which grace is concerned, and in which grace is displayed. This work, therefore, is very diverse from all the other works of God, and as much superior to them, as it is different from them. The wonders of divine grace displayed in this work, divert the attention of the most exalted creatures from every other object in the universe. The angels, those morning



Digitized by Google

stars who saw the world created, and who have been acquainted with all the works of God, still desire to look into the work of redemption, in order to make new and larger discoveries in the divine character. And when all the works of God shall be completed, and all holy beings collected, it will be their everlasting employment to celebrate the displays of divine grace in the work of redemption. Indeed this work, which has employed the thoughts of God from eternity, which has brought the Son of God from heaven to earth, and which has raised the guilty sons of men from earth to heaven, will forever remain the grand mirror, to reflect the brightest beams of the divine glory.

2. If the gospel is a scheme of divine grace, then it is really founded on this single truth, that all the human race deserve complete and endless ruin. This, I take it for granted, is the dreadful misery from which the gospel is designed to save sinners. And this misery they deserve, if there be the least grace in the gospel. For grace consists in saving men from deserved misery. There is no grace in saving them from undeserved evils, however great and dreadful. If they were exposed to eternal destruction, and if the gospel should save them from it, yet there would be no grace displayed in their salvation, unless they deserved the damnation of hell. The gospel therefore, which bringeth salvation to sinners upon the footing of grace, necessarily supposes that they deserve eternal destruction upon the footing of justice. So that if the gospel be a scheme of grace, which is designed to save sinners from eternal misery, then it must solely rest on the ground of their just desert of complete and endless ruin. "If one died for all," says the apostle, "then were all dead;" so if the gospel offers grace to all, then all deserve to be damned. If we admit, therefore, that the gospel offers to save us from eternal destruction, upon the footing of grace, we must admit that we are ill deserving, and hell deserving creatures. This character we must not only believe, but feel, if we ever feel and enjoy the grace of the gospel.

3. If the gospel is a scheme of divine grace, then all the essential or fundamental doctrines which compose it, are doctrines of grace. The gospel is built upon a number of essential doctrines, which constitute its nature, and distinguish it from every other scheme of religion. Every system of religion, as

Digitized by Google

well as every form of government, must have some peculiar and fundamental principles. This we must grant, or else deny that there is any essential difference between the religion of a Christian, and that of a Turk, or a Pagan. If the gospel then must have some fundamental principles, we may safely conclude that these are the doctrines of grace. We have no occasion to determine the number, in order to determine the nature of the first principles of the gospel. To determine the nature of the gospel, is sufficient to determine the nature of all its leading and fundamental principles. We have shown that the gospel is a scheme of divine grace; and this shows that all the doctrines which are necessary to compose this scheme of religion, are doctrines of grace. The nature of the gospel, therefore, directs us how to find its fundamental doctrines, and how to distinguish them from all other doctrines which are not essential to Christianity, or which are subversive of it.

4. If the gospel is a scheme of religion composed of the doctrines of grace, then to deny the doctrines of grace, is to deny the gospel. To deny the first principles of any system of sentiments, is to deny the system. To deny the first principles of Newton's philosophy, is to deny his system of philosophy. To deny the first principles of Bishop Berkeley's ideal system, is to deny his system of metaphysics. So, to deny the doctrines of grace, which are the first principles of the gospel, is to deny the gospel. It is by no means necessary to deny the inspiration of the Scriptures, in order to deny the Christian religion. The Jews readily acknowledged the inspiration of the Scriptures; but yet they denied the doctrines of grace which were contained in the writings of Moses and the prophets; and for that reason, denied and rejected the gospel of grace, which Christ preached in all its purity and simplicity. And there were some in the apostle's day, who believed the gospel as a divine revelation, but at the same time, denied the doctrines of grace, and therefore in the apostle's view, really and totally denied the gospel. "I marvel," says he to the Galatians, "that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel; which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ." The apostle here considers the gospel of Christ as a gospel of grace, and therefore considers any system of doctrines which is

Digitized by Google

contrary to grace, as another gospel. But not, strictly speaking, as another gospel, because no system of sentiments which is contrary to grace, deserves the name of a gospel. Besides, he considers every one, who preaches a scheme of religion which is contrary to grace, as denying and subverting the gospel of Christ. This passage of the apostle, therefore, fully proves what our subject suggests, that to deny the doctrines of grace, is to deny the gospel.

5. If the gospel is a scheme of religion composed of the doctrines of grace, then it must disapprove and condemn all schemes of religion which are not built upon these peculiar principles. Accordingly we find the gospel has, under every dispensation, disapproved and condemned every other scheme of religion, without distinction. To this peculiarity of the gospel we must ascribe the general enmity, opposition and virulence of mankind against it, in every age of the world. It was on this account, Bishop Warburton observes, that the enemies of the Jewish religion agreed to stigmatize it as the unsociable religion. The Jews might have lived in harmony among the Pagans, had they only exercised a little catholicism towards the pagan religion. But they insisted with inflexibility, that their religion was the only true and divine religion, and every other false and absurd. And this uncharitableness towards the various species of the pagan religion, drew upon them a load of infamy, reproach and contempt. So when Christianity was propagated in the Roman empire, the emperors had no objection against its spreading among the people, until they found that the Christians exercised no charity towards their religion; but as soon as they perceived this, they immediately commenced the most virulent enemies and persecutors of the meek and harmless disciples of Christ. The pagans cultivated universal harmony and mutual charity among themselves, notwithstanding their various objects and modes of worship; for they considered all their own religions as absolutely equal in point of truth, divinity and importance. And had the Christians only allowed them to consider their religion in the same light, they would have treated them with the same candor and forbearance. But the Christians understood the genius and spirit of the gospel too well, to place it upon a level with any other scheme of religion in the world. They had imbibed the opinion of the inspired

Digitized by Google

teachers, who unanimously condemn every system of religion but the true. The prophets, especially Jeremiah and Ezekiel, reprobate all false teachers and false sentiments, with the greatest freedom and severity. Christ denounces the heaviest woes against the Scribes and Pharisees, who taught for doctrines the commandments of men, which, in his view, made void the doctrines of grace. And with what a spirit of confidence does the apostle Paul address the Galatians on this serious subject: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." All the inspired writers speak the same language, and breathe the same spirit towards those who deny the first principles of the gospel. They have never, in any of their writings, let drop a single expression which requires, or even allows us to exercise the least catholicism towards those who maintain any system of sentiments which is subversive of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

6. If the gospel is a scheme of religion composed of the doctrines of grace, then modern catholicism is real infidelity. Men of modern catholicism make no distinction between essential and non-essential doctrines; but universally embrace, in the arms of charity, all sects or denominations of men who believe the Bible to be the word of God; whether they profess Arianism, Socinianism, Materialism, Universalism, or any other particular system of religious principles.* And what is still more remarkable, they are so lavish of their charity to these needy objects, that they have little or none to spare for others who are more strict and orthodox than themselves. Mr. Locke, in his "Reasonableness of Christianity," labors to prove that all a man needs to believe in order to be saved, is this single proposition, *that Jesus is the Christ.* And Dr. Price is equally liberal in his religious sentiments. In a letter to Dr. Priestley, he expresses his most ardent wish that this sentiment might be stamped on

* "Indeed, this charity is as mysterious as the faith of the most bigoted Catholic; it is equally full of contradictions; and seems resolved to found itself, not upon evidence, but upon the want of it."—*Dr. Witherspoon's Ecclesiastical Characteristics, Maxim* xii.



Digitized by Google

every human mind: "that worth of character and true integrity, and consequently God's acceptance, are not necessarily connected with any particular set of opinions." Yet this great and catholic divine, in one of his late sermons, first gives a concise and accurate account of the doctrines of grace, and then reprobates them as the most absurd set of principles to be found in the Christian world. This is modern catholicism, which extends to all but those to whom it ought to extend; and which would break down all distinction between essential and non-essential doctrines, that every man may have full liberty to embrace any scheme of religion, however false and absurd.

Now is not such catholicism real infidelity? Does it not carry in it a disbelief of all that Christ, the prophets, and the apostles have said, concerning the fatal tendency of corrupt sentiments in religion? And does it not, at the same time, equally carry in it a disbelief of all the fundamental principles of Christianity? Can any man really believe the essential doctrines of the gospel, and yet believe that he or any other person may disbelieve and deny them at his pleasure, without the least danger or guilt? This would be to set a lower price upon Christianity than the Jews set upon its divine Author, and to betray the doctrines of grace for less than thirty pieces of silver.

Besides, this catholicism tends to beget and diffuse a deistical spirit among all ranks and classes of men. For if once they imbibe the notion that the gospel may be made to mean any thing, every thing, or nothing; that it has no essential and fundamental doctrines, which are absolutely necessary to be believed in order to salvation; they will readily draw this easy and natural conclusion, that it is of no real importance whether they believe the gospel to be of divine inspiration or not. And were it true, that men might be saved without believing a single doctrine of the Bible, it would be difficult, indeed, to show why they could not as well be saved without believing the Bible itself. Modern catholicism, therefore, which sets the doctrines of grace and all the fundamental principles of Christianity in such a low and trifling light, serves more to propagate the spirit of deism and universal skepticism, than all the boasted and specious arguments of professed infidels. Indeed, let any one only adopt this catholic principle. and there is

Digitized by Google

nothing to restrain him from embracing the grossest errors and absurdities that can possibly be suggested. This is already exemplified in Dr. Priestley, who would fain pass for a warm and bold defender of Christianity, after he has exerted the whole strength of his genius, and the whole force of his learning, to subvert some of the fundamental principles of both natural and revealed religion.

7. If the gospel is a scheme of religion composed of the doctrines of grace, then there may be a propriety in forming and subscribing creeds, or confessions of faith. These are considered in a very bad light by men of moderation and catholicism. They would have the Bible to be the only standard of orthodoxy, and represent creeds and confessions of faith as a clog to inquiry, a source of hypocrisy, and even a violation of the sacred rights of conscience and private judgment. But let us consider whether there be any just ground to discard all creeds and confessions of faith. If a man may believe the divinity of the gospel, and yet disbelieve and deny the doctrines of grace, which are the fundamental principles of the gospel, then his most ample profession of believing the inspiration of the Scriptures, is no proper evidence of his being found in the faith, and established in the first principles of the oracles of God. There is therefore a necessity of having some standard more particular and definite than the general standard of the Scriptures, if we wish to ascertain whether a man really believes the doctrines of grace, which are the distinguishing principles of Christianity. And if such a standard be proper and necessary, it is as easy to form it, as to distinguish and define the nature and essence of the gospel. For if the gospel be plain and easy to understand, then it is easy to distinguish and collect the first principles of it, and to throw them into the form of a creed, or confession of faith. Nor do any at this day, if I conjecture right, object against creeds because they do not understand them, but because they do. And, after the first principles of the gospel are thus thrown into the form of a creed, a man may solemnly subscribe them as articles which he now believes, and which he always will believe. For the doctrines of grace are not mere opinions, which a man may change every day in the year, but real, essential, important truths, which he may know to be truths, and which he is obliged always to believe and profess, at the risk of his life.

Digitized by Google

There is a wide difference between essential and non-essential truths, or between bare opinions and infallible doctrines. The primitive martyrs understood this distinction, and accordingly gave up their lives, rather than give up the essential doctrines of the gospel. Paul likewise understood this distinction, and therefore kept the faith, at the expense of his life. And upon the ground of this distinction, the inspired writers exhort Christians to maintain a firm and unshaken adherence to the doctrines according to godliness. The wise man bids us "buy the truth, and sell it not." Paul forbids the Ephesians to be "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine." He tells the Colossians that they would render themselves acceptable to God, if they continued in the faith grounded and settled, and were not moved away from the hope of the gospel. And again he says, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him; rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith." In his second epistle to the Thessalonians, after describing the Man of sin, who should bring in strong delusions to the destruction of those who should believe them, he says, "But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; whereunto he called you by our gospel;" "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle." In one of his directions to Timothy, he says, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them." And in another, he says, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." Now if the Scripture thus binds us to be rooted, grounded, settled, stablished in the faith, then we may bind ourselves to hold fast the form of sound words, and to be steadfast and unmovable in the doctrines of Christ. For, whatever God may bind us to do, we may bind ourselves to do. Christians in general, therefore, and Christian ministers in particular, may, whenever there is a proper occasion for it, bind themselves to be found in the faith, by owning and subscribing a creed, or confession of faith. There is the same safety and consistency in owning and subscribing an orthodox creed, as in owning and subscribing the Bible itself. For we may as certainly know

Digitized by Google

whether the principles which lie in a creed be true, as whether the principles which lie in the Bible be true. And it is as warrantable to profess our belief of certain truths which lie in a creed, as to profess our belief of certain truths which lie in the Bible. And this has always been the general opinion of the church, from the first ages of Christianity down to the present day. Nor do I see how a particular church can now be properly formed, without adopting some creed or confession of faith, as the bond of their union in the faith and practice of the gospel. At least, I cannot see how a church which has no such bond of union, can consistently refuse or exclude any from their communion who profess to believe the Bible, though they deny all the essential doctrines of the Christian religion.

8. If the gospel is a scheme of religion composed of the doctrines of grace, then it is proper and necessary, that ministers should examine those whom they approbate to preach the gospel, respecting their belief of the fundamental principles of Christianity. Ministers are set for the defence of the gospel; and, in order to discharge this duty, they ought, as far as possible, to keep out of the ministry all such as would pervert the gospel of Christ. The right of ordaining others to preach the gospel gives them a right of inquiring into their religious sentiments. And this right involves an obligation to use all proper means of knowing whether they are properly established in the great and fundamental doctrines of the gospel. Nor can they be faithful to Christ, nor to themselves, nor to candidates, nor to the souls of men, if, through fear or favor or negligence they introduce those into the ministry who are disposed to wrest the Scriptures to their own and others' destruction. To guard them against this, the apostle charges them to "lay hands suddenly on no man," and to commit the gospel to faithful men, who are able to teach others also. It is an alarming circumstance, at this day, that ministers have become so remiss in examining candidates for the work of the ministry. They not only approbate them to preach, but even ordain them to the pastoral charge, without the least examination of their religious principles. And some boast of this conduct, under the noble idea of liberality of sentiment. It deserves, however, serious consideration, whether it will appear in this light in the view of Him who hath set them for the defence of the gospel.

Digitized by Google

9. If the gospel is a scheme of religion composed of the doctrines of grace, then, if ministers neglect to preach the doctrines of grace, they neglect to preach the gospel. We may preach many real and important truths, while we neglect to preach the doctrines of grace. But while we neglect to preach these, our sermons, however elegantly composed and gracefully delivered, are no better than the empty declamations of heathen moralists. Socrates taught the existence of the Deity, the immortality of the soul, and its happy or miserable state after death. Cicero beautifully described and inculcated justice, veracity, temperance, and all the moral and social virtues. Seneca read solemn lectures upon the vanity of the world, the deformity of vice, and the wisdom and importance of improving time, and preparing for eternity. If we preach the same doctrines and duties upon the same natural principles, we deserve the name of heathen, rather than Christian preachers.

But this is not the worst; for, while we confine our preaching to these duties and doctrines of natural religion, we betray the cause of Christianity, and rob our people of the knowledge of those doctrines of grace which alone are able to make them wise unto salvation. If we neglect therefore to preach the doctrines of grace, we are unspeakably worse than no preachers at all. Our people had much better be left alone, with the Bible in their hands: peradventure they may read, understand, believe, and be saved. But if we preach, every Sabbath, something directly contrary to the genius and spirit of the gospel, we take the most effectual method to deceive and ruin their souls forever. Error, according to the inspired writers, has as great a tendency to destroy, as truth has to save the souls of men. Christ compares error to leaven, and Paul compares it to a canker, or gangrene. Error is the same to the soul, that poison is to the body. As a small degree of poison will injure the body, so a small degree of error will injure the soul. And as a large degree of poison will destroy the body, so a large degree of error will destroy the soul. It is as dangerous and fatal, therefore, to preach a system of error to our people, as to inculcate a course of practical vice and immorality; for either will directly tend to destroy both their souls and ours forever. Hence, says our Lord, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."

Digitized by Google

10. If the gospel is a scheme of religion composed of the doctrines of grace, then none who are friendly to grace, can be really unfriendly to the doctrines of grace. Some who profess to be very friendly to grace, appear open and bitter enemies to the doctrines of grace. But how is this consistent? If they are really pleased with grace, why should they not be as much pleased with the doctrines of grace? To be pleased with grace, is to be pleased with the character of God in damning sinners for the least violation of his holy and righteous law. Whoever can see a beauty in this part of the divine character, can see a beauty in divine grace. And whoever can see a beauty in divine grace, can see a beauty in the doctrines of grace. For all the doctrines of grace grow out of, or unite with this single truth, that God is amiable and glorious in the displays of his punitive justice. How then can those who love this divine truth, hate and oppose the doctrine of election, the doctrine of divine sovereignty, the doctrine of unconditional submission, the doctrine of justification by faith alone, or any other of the doctrines of grace? Is there any thing more displeasing in these doctrines, than in the doctrine of eternal destruction for the least sin? Or if there be any grace in God's saving sinners from complete and endless ruin, is there not as much grace in those doctrines which immediately flow from this source? None therefore who really love the grace of God in the salvation of sinners, can understandingly hate and oppose the doctrines of grace. Here, however, I beg leave to borrow the words of a late pious and elegant writer, who has set this subject in a clear and striking light. "Believe me, my dear friend, salvation, both in its root and all its branches, is entirely of grace; or else believe me, for the many cogent testimonies of Scripture, which most circumstantially ascertain this great truth. Election is of grace; 'Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children,' not on account of human worthiness, but 'according to the good pleasure of his will.' Equally gratuitous is our effectual vocation; 'God hath called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace.' Faith is owing to the same cause; 'By grace are ye saved through faith.' From hence springs justification; 'Being justified freely by his grace.' This is the origin of regeneration; 'Of his own will begat he us, by the word of truth.' The consummation of

Digitized by Google

bliss flows from the same all-supplying cause; 'The gift of God is eternal life.' It is in every respect a gift; the superstructure is reared by the hand of grace; and when the top stone is brought forth, when our felicity is completed in the kingdom of heaven, the everlasting acclamation will be, 'Grace, grace, unto it.' This is that glorious gospel, which human learning could never have discovered; which carnal reason cannot understand; which the wisdom of this world accounteth foolishness; which the envy of the devil, and the pride of man will always oppose."

You will now permit me, my hearers, to bring this subject home to our own bosoms, and ask this serious question: Do we oppose the gospel?

In particular, Do we who profess to be ministers of the gospel, oppose it? This is possible. For we are by nature children of wrath, even as others. We have naturally a carnal mind, which is enmity against God, not subject to his law, neither indeed can be. We naturally hate the doctrines of grace, as much as other men. But if we neglect to preach these doctrines because we hate them, or if we neglect to preach them because others hate them, or if we preach them while our own hearts rise against them, how unspeakably guilty are we in the sight of our divine Master! Let us then settle this question, which it concerns us more than any other in the world to settle: Do we love that glorious gospel which we are solemnly bound to study every day, and to preach every Sabbath, with supreme affection and delight?

Nor is this question uninteresting to him, who is this day to lay himself under the most solemn obligations "to testify the gospel of the grace of God." How much does it concern him to be established in the faith and in the love of the gospel! In this, his own soul and the souls of this people are deeply interested. Let him therefore be entreated to take heed unto himself, and unto his doctrine, and continue in them; that he may both save himself and them that hear him.

And may this church and congregation inquire, whether they are willing to receive the grace of God in truth. The man who is now to be set over them in the Lord, will, we trust, come to them in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of grace. We beseech them therefore not to receive the grace of God in vain.

Digitized by Google

If he plainly and faithfully preaches the doctrines of grace, they will be a savor of life unto life, or a savor of death unto death to your souls. Take heed, therefore, how ye hear.

And let us all who are present on this solemn occasion, take heed, lest we reject the gospel of the grace of God. Our divine and gracious Redeemer hath forewarned both ministers and people of their imminent danger. "The stone which the builders rejected, the same has become the head of the corner." "Whosoever shall fall upon that stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."



Digitized by Google

# SERMON IV.

## COUNSEL OF GOD.

PREACHED AT THE ORDINATION OF MR. WALTER HARRIS TO THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE CHURCH IN DUNBARTON, N. H., AUGUST 26, 1789.

---

For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.—Acts 20 : 27.

THE apostle makes this declaration under peculiar circumstances, which carry the strongest evidence of sincerity. He is taking his final leave of those to whom he had preached the gospel with saving success. They expect never to see his face again, nor he theirs, until they meet in the world of spirits, before the Supreme Judge. In this situation he solemnly calls upon them to bear testimony to his ministerial faithfulness. "I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." This seems to be the spirit of the apostle's appeal: "I know, and you know, and the Searcher of my heart knows, that I have faithfully preached the gospel among you; for, instead of using any mean arts or subterfuges to conceal the truth, I have laid open the whole scheme of redemption, with all possible freedom and plainness."

As this declaration breathes the true spirit of a faithful minister, so it naturally leads us to show, in this discourse, that faithful ministers mean to preach the whole counsel of God.

Paul was a faithful minister. He loved that gospel, which he once hated. He admired that divine Saviour, whom he once persecuted. He espoused that glorious cause, which he once opposed. His former views and affections being totally



Digitized by Google

changed by divine grace, he was prompted to preach the gospel from an ardent desire to promote the Redeemer's kingdom, and increase the number of his cordial subjects. He knew nothing more desirable, than to be instrumental in turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. He was willing to spend and be spent for the salvation of sinners. He was willing to sacrifice the most promising earthly prospects, and to endure the heaviest load of evils that the world could heap upon him, for the sake of Christ and the good of souls. He felt, therefore, no inclination to handle the word of God deceitfully, but sincerely desired, by the manifestation of the truth, to approve himself to his own and to every man's conscience, in the sight of God.

This was Paul's character. And this is the character of all faithful ministers. They all have the same spirit, act from the same motives, and pursue the same objects. There is, therefore, no occasion to spend time in proving that faithful ministers mean to preach as the apostle Paul did. This point is sufficiently clear from their Christian character. The only thing here that needs to be considered, is, how they preach so as to declare the whole counsel of God. This, indeed, deserves particular attention. And upon this let me observe,

1. That faithful ministers, in preaching the gospel, trace it up to its original source and fountain head.

The gospel is not an emanation of the divine *nature*, but a fruit of the divine *will*. God is a voluntary agent. He acts of choice, not of constraint. His nature lays him under no natural necessity of acting, or producing any effects out of himself. Had it been agreeable to his will, he might have existed, from eternity unto eternity, without giving being to any created object. His nature, therefore, by no means obliged him to give existence to men, and much less to give his Son to die for them, after they had forfeited every mark of his favor. Hence it appears plain and obvious, that the gospel of divine grace must have been a perfectly free and voluntary scheme, which the Supreme Being devised, determined, and adjusted in all its parts, before the foundation of the world. For God is a wise as well as a voluntary agent. And every wise, voluntary agent always forms his plan, before he begins to operate. The general concerts his scheme, before he orders his army to march.

Digitized by Google

The master of the ship determines his course, before he launches into the mighty deep. And the architect draws a complete plan of his intended work, before he shapes his materials, or begins to put them together. So the only wise God, the Creator and Governor of the world, voluntarily determined and adjusted the whole scheme of redemption, before he brought men, the intended subjects of it, into existence. The schemes of men are often imperfect, because they determine the end, without determining and securing the means. But no such imperfection ever attends the divine counsels. God determines the means as well as the end, and binds them together by an invincible connection. The gospel, therefore, as it lay in the divine mind from eternity, was one uniform, consistent, perfect scheme.

Accordingly, faithful ministers, in preaching the gospel, mean to trace it up to this original source and fountain head. So Paul tells us he preached. "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." And in his writings, he appears to make a point of illustrating this leading and capital idea of the gospel. Permit me to read you a passage to this purpose, in his epistle to the Ephesians. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." The apostle here represents the gospel of God as the mystery of his will, as the good pleasure of his will, as the choice, the counsel, and purpose of his will, which he purposed in himself, before the foundation of the world. He is so far from aiming to conceal the original and eternal source of the gospel, that he uses a great variety of similar terms, to make it

Digitized by Google

plain and intelligible to every capacity that the gospel took its origin from the voluntary purpose and design of God, which he completely formed and established in his own mind in the early ages of eternity. And every faithful minister means, in the same manner, to trace the gospel up to its fountain head, and so declare the whole counsel of God.

2. Faithful ministers mean to preach the gospel in its full latitude and extent.

The gospel is very extensive. It comprehends all the designs of the Creator. It is, strictly speaking, the sum and comprehension of all the divine purposes. Though the designs of God in creation and providence are very numerous and complicated, yet, numerous and complicated as they are, the gospel contains them all. They are all but so many constituent and necessary parts of the one great design of redeeming love. When God concerted the scheme of redemption through the mediation of Christ, he fixed on the works of creation and providence as the means to carry into effect this supreme and ultimate object. In this extensive view, the apostle frequently considers and represents the gospel. Speaking of the purpose of God in the work of redemption, he says, Ephesians 1: 10, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ both which are in heaven, and which are on earth." This intimates that Christ, in his mediatorial character, is the grand centre of union and of blessedness among both men and angels.

In the third chapter of this same epistle he says again, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ: and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." This passage exhibits the gospel scheme of redemption as that which lay a mystery or secret in the divine mind from eternity; as that which constituted the Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour of sinners; and, in a word, as that which comprehends all the manifold wisdom of



Digitized by Google

God, which ever has been, and ever will be displayed in the works of creation, providence and grace.

This same apostle, in another place, gives us a still more full and particular representation of the universal extent of the gospel scheme. The text I advert to is in the first chapter of Colossians. These are the words: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even to the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist: and he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preëminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." Here we are expressly told that all things, visible and invisible, from the highest seraph to the lowest insect, from the largest globe to the smallest atom, were universally created not only by Christ, but for him; that is, to promote and accomplish the great work of redemption, which shall finally terminate in the complete union and blessedness of all holy beings. Such is the length and breadth and magnitude of the gospel scheme. It involves all the divine counsels, and all created natures and objects. And in order to declare the whole counsel of God, it is necessary to exhibit the gospel in this wide and comprehensive latitude and extent. This leads me to observe once more,

3. That faithful ministers mean to preach the gospel in all its full and final effects.

We have just now observed that the gospel is a great and extensive scheme, which takes in all intelligent natures, and comprises all the counsels and operations of God towards them, through every period of their existence. It must, therefore,

Digitized by Google

most essentially and universally affect all their views and feelings forever. It has, indeed, already deeply affected them. All the events which have hitherto taken place, in carrying forward this gracious design, have produced great and lasting effects in the minds of both good and evil spirits in this and other worlds. The solemn scenes which are this day passing before us may perhaps as much engage the attention, and as sensibly impress the minds of invisible as of visible beings. But however inattentive and unaffected we or they may be on this occasion, yet we should do well to remember that all these steps which we are now taking, as well as all those which have been taken, to promote the work of redemption, will eventually and eternally affect every intelligent creature. And this great and extensive scheme will have a growing influence upon the whole intellectual system, from age to age, to its final accomplishment. Heaven, earth and hell will be deeply affected by the general conversion of Jews and Gentiles; by the destruction of the power and authority of the Man of sin; by the restraints which shall be laid upon the malice and influence of Satan; and by the universal dominion which shall be given to the people of God for a thousand years together. But when God shall judge the secrets of men, as the apostle says, "according to my gospel," then, and not till then, its full effects will be universally seen, and universally felt. Then it will appear that the gospel, in its rise, progress, and final issue, fixed the states and formed the characters of all the inhabitants of heaven and of hell and that these amazing effects of it will not be transient and momentary, but permanent as the throne of God, and interminable as the ages of eternity.

Thus all faithful ministers, after the example of the great apostle, mean to lay open the gospel scheme in its original source, universal extent, and final influence and effect upon the whole intelligent creation. And by this mode of preaching they do, in the highest and best sense of our text, declare the whole counsel of God.

I now proceed to make a few reflections upon the subject we have been considering.

1. Faithful ministers never lose sight of the gospel in their preaching. All their discourses breathe an evangelical spirit. They treat every subject which they have occasion to consider,

Digitized by Google

in a gospel strain. Not that they confine their attention to one or even to a few subjects; for they studiously aim at a rich variety in the course of their preaching. But whatever subject they undertake to handle, they explain it upon gospel principles, and enforce it by gospel motives. For they consider the gospel as including all the doctrines and duties of religion. Accordingly they never treat any subject as totally detached from the general system of Christianity. They never preach mere philosophy, nor mere metaphysics, nor mere morality. If they treat of the being and perfections of God; if they treat of the works of creation and providence; if they treat of the powers and faculties of the human soul; if they treat of the social and relative duties of life; they consider all these subjects as so many branches of the one, comprehensive scheme of the gospel. For they determine, with the apostle Paul, not to know any thing among their people save Jesus Christ and him crucified. Hence, when they preach upon the inward exercises and affections of the heart, they represent love, repentance, humility, submission, sobriety, etc., not as moral virtues, but as Christian graces. And when they discourse upon moral topics, they inculcate the duties of rulers and subjects, of parents and children, of masters and servants, by motives and obligations drawn from the precepts and sanctions of the gospel. So that all their public discourses are peculiarly suited to awaken and convince sinners, and to quicken and edify saints; and, of course, to carry into execution the great and benevolent design of the Christian system. Hence faithful ministers eminently merit the distinguishing character of gospel preachers.

2. Faithful ministers dwell largely upon some particular doctrines which others silently pass over, or but rarely mention in their public instructions. They say much about God's design in the creation of the world. They insist that he aims supremely and ultimately at his own glory in all his works. They say much about the perfections of the divine plan. They insist that it is, of all possible ones, absolutely the best. They say much about the evils which are found in the divine system. They insist that God makes them all sometimes the means, and always the occasion, of superior good. They say much about the divine supremacy. They insist that God is concerned in all events, and guides all the views, designs, and voluntary actions of moral

Digitized by Google

agents. They say much about the decrees of God. They insist that he hath chosen some to everlasting life, and predestinated others to everlasting ruin; that he hath brought both natural and moral evils into his original plan; that he hath immutably fixed the characters and conditions of all intelligent beings; that he hath established an intimate and indissoluble connection between causes and effects, means and ends, both in the natural and moral world; or, to say all in fewer words, that he hath, from eternity, fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass. They say much about the fall of man, the moral corruption of human nature, the perishing state of sinners, the grace of God in providing a Saviour, the sovereignty of God in the application of redemption, the irresistible agency of God in the renovation of the heart, and the power and faithfulness of God in the final perseverance of saints. These doctrines lie in the way of those who declare the whole counsel of God. For they grow out of the root, and spread through all the branches of the gospel. The gospel therefore cannot possibly be laid open in its original source, extensive nature, and final influence, without setting these doctrines in a full and fair light. Besides, those who declare the whole counsel of God, consider these doctrines as the nerves and sinews of the gospel, and the best adapted to awaken a sense of duty, and a spirit of devotion in the hearts and consciences of their hearers. Accordingly they make these the leading subjects of their public discourses. And though they often treat on other less interesting topics, yet they are careful to say nothing which may serve either to obscure the evidence, or weaken the importance, of these distinguishing articles of the glorious gospel.

3. We hence see why faithful ministers are so much more apt than others, to irritate and displease men in their preaching. This difference among preachers is often observed and mentioned by their hearers, who generally entertain very different opinions about it. While some look upon it as very strange and unaccountable, others, without the least hesitation, ascribe it to the worst of causes. But we may easily discover the truth of the case, if we only attend to what has been said. Faithful ministers declare the whole counsel of God, by which they represent every thing in a disagreeable light to sinners. By opening the gospel scheme, they make it appear that every creature,

Digitized by Google

every object, and every event in the universe shall serve to save, or destroy the enemies of truth, just as God absolutely determined from eternity. If they treat of the divine decrees, they make this appear. If they treat of the divine sovereignty, they make this appear. If they treat of the divine agency, they make this appear. If they treat of the common course of providence, they make this appear. In short, if they treat of any other truth, they carry it so far as to make this appear. For they always treat every subject in its intimate connection with the one great scheme which comprises all the designs, all the creatures, and all the works of God. And viewed in this light, one thing is nearly as disagreeable as another to every carnal heart. Grace is as disagreeable as justice; heaven as disagreeable as hell; time as disagreeable as eternity; prosperity as disagreeable as adversity; the promises of the gospel as disagreeable as its most awful threatenings. For all these things stand equally prepared to destroy every one of those whom God designs should be finally destroyed. But some preachers never declare the whole counsel of God; and, of consequence never display any one truth, nor any one object in this full and important light. Hence they never preach any thing which is very displeasing to sinners, who are willing to hear, at least some part of the truth, about the most important subjects. In particular, they can bear to hear that God decrees some things, that he acts as sovereign in some cases, that he governs them in some respects, that he disposes of some of their interests, and indeed, that he intends to punish some of the most incorrigible of the human race, in a future state. But when they hear divine truths carried in their full latitude and extent, through all their relations and connections in the great and comprehensive scheme of redemption, their hearts rise, and they can no longer sit with ease or patience under the preached gospel. The whole truth is infinitely too much for their proud hearts to endure. It is neither strange nor new therefore, that faithful ministers should give peculiar offence to sinners, who have always been displeased with such preachers.

Paul, it must be allowed, was every way qualified to preach the gospel to the best advantage. He was a man of learning, a man of eloquence, a man of prudence, and a man deeply acquainted with human nature, and the most engaging modes

Digitized by Google

of address. He very well knew how to please mankind, and he spared no pains to please them, so far as the genius of the gospel and the dictates of his own conscience would permit him to do it. This he assures us in the strongest terms. "Give none offence," says he to the Corinthians, "neither to the Jews, nor the Gentiles, nor to the church of God. Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant to all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." But notwithstanding all this prudence, condescension, and winning address, the apostle highly displeased many by his preaching. When he preached at Damascus, he displeased the Jews so much that they took counsel to kill him. When he went from Damascus to Jerusalem, he there raised the resentment of some so high that they went about to slay him. At Antioch, they expelled him out of their coasts for preaching. At Thessalonica they were so exasperated at his doctrines that they beset the house where he was, with a determination to destroy him. Nor is this all; for even his friends, it seems, once forsook him for preaching too plainly. "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me; I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear." These are plain facts; which carry convincing evidence that no faithful ministers can possibly exhibit divine truths, as they lie connected in the divne counsel, without giving offence to sinners. The gospel thus fully displayed, always did and always must give offence to those whose hearts and deeds are evil.

4. Faithful preachers are weighty and powerful preachers. Their discourses have a peculiar energy, which, we often see, bears down the minds of a whole assembly. Not a single per-

Digitized by Google

son is able to resist their weight and influence. This is not so much owing to the manner of their speaking, as to the importance and perspicuity of what they deliver. They plainly and fully lay open the gospel scheme, and thereby lay open the nature and importance of all created and uncreated objects, as they stand connected with it. And this at once gives both meaning and weight to every expression they use. Accordingly, when they speak of God, they are understood to mean that Being who exists of himself, who determines all events, who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will, and who carries in his hand the eternal interests of the whole creation. When they speak of the law of God, they are understood to mean a law which requires perfect obedience, on pain of his eternal displeasure. When they speak of the justice of God, they are understood to mean that justice which will doom all the finally impenitent to endless perdition. When they speak of the mercy of God, they are understood to mean that sovereign mercy which saves one sinner, and which leaves another to perish in his sins forever. When they speak of love to God, they are understood to mean that impartial, universal disinterested charity, which never seeks her own, but always prefers the divine glory and the general good to the personal happiness of any individual. When they speak of submission to God, they are understood to mean absolute, unconditional submission. When they speak of obedience to the divine commands, they are understood to mean nothing short of true holiness. When they speak of regeneration, they are understood to mean the renovation of the heart by the Divine Spirit. When they speak of saints, they are understood to mean the elect of God, vessels of mercy, and heirs of glory. And when they speak of sinners, they are understood to mean totally depraved, guilty, hell deserving creatures, who are constantly exposed to eternal destruction. In short, let them treat on what subject they will, their meaning is both plain and important; which gives a peculiar weight and energy to every word they speak.

Besides, they have the advantage of speaking under the united weight and influence of the whole of the divine system.

As they consider every subject in connection with the whole counsel of God, so the whole counsel of God seems to be more or less brought into view by every subject they handle, which nec-

Digitized by Google

essarily gives it additional force and solemnity. For the whole counsel of God inseparably connects time and eternity, heaven and hell, all worlds, and all beings in the universe. And every truth exhibited in such a connection as this, must appear unspeakably weighty and solemn to every discerning mind. Hence the preaching has a superior power to seize the hearts and consciences of men; and the gospel as it falls from their lips, falls, as our Saviour says, like a weighty stone, which will grind every opposer to powder. Hence,

5. It is of vast importance that those who undertake to preach the gospel, should make it appear as it really is, one great, comprehensive, and perfectly connected scheme. This is the apostolic mode of preaching; and this is the best mode of preaching that ministers can possibly pursue. There is no other, as we have just observed, which will give their discourses such a superior weight and solemnity. But besides this advantage, they will derive many others of equal importance, from exhibiting the full import and extent of the gospel.

One is, they will preach much more consistently. This is a point worthy of their particular and constant attention. For consistency is the beauty and ornament, if not the essence of good preaching. And this arises from considering the relation which one truth bears to another, and which each bears to the whole counsel of God. While preachers lay open this uniform scheme, they are obliged to keep the general connection of divine truth in view; which will naturally produce a beautiful consistency through all their discourses. But, whenever they explode systems, and despise forms in preaching, they are perpetually liable to fall into the grossest contradiction and absurdities. And indeed we find this too often exemplified. A series of inconsistency runs through the whole course of some men's preaching. They not only contradict in one discourse what they have said in another, but they say and unsay, assert and deny, the same things in the same discourse. Such inconsistency is very disagreeable and detrimental in preaching. It strengthens infidels, and wounds the feelings of believers. And therefore, to avoid this, it is of absolute importance that ministers should preach the whole counsel of God.

Again: They must preach in this manner, if they wish to distinguish themselves from false teachers, who corrupt the gospel,



Digitized by Google

and destroy the souls of men. Such teachers, amidst all their follies and absurdities, always preach some truth, but not the whole truth. The best way, therefore, to expose their errors and to defeat their influence, is, to preach the whole truth, or declare the whole counsel of God, which contains that perfectly uniform and consistent scheme of religion, which stands opposed to all the dreams and delusions of weak and wicked men. If any preacher will only lay open the great design, the full extent, and final operation of the gospel, he will effectually distinguish his character, and convince every hearer that he is no Arminian, no Antinomian, no Socinian, no Arian, no Universalist, no Deist. And surely every faithful minister must feel the importance of distinguishing himself from the various species of heretics, in order to discountenance error, and throw the whole weight of his influence into the scale of truth.

Again: By preaching the whole counsel of God, ministers will convey the largest portion of knowledge to their hearers. Those preachers who perpetually swim upon the surface of the gospel, never teach their people any real knowledge of the great system of Christianity. For no subject in divinity can be said to be really known, without being known in its various connections with the other branches of divinity, and with the general scheme of divine grace. But superficial preachers, who never lay open the gospel as one great, uniform, consistent design, never represent one doctrine of religion in its full and proper connection. Hence they never convey much real instruction to their hearers, by their vague and indeterminate preaching. But those who declare the whole counsel of God are always instructive. They truly enlighten the minds, and enlarge the views of their hearers, by every sermon they preach. For, in every discourse, they further unfold some part of the great design of the Deity. And after their hearers have once become acquainted with the general scheme of the gospel, they will receive instruction with peculiar ease and avidity. Common people are capable of understanding the gospel, if it be plainly and fully exhibited. Their ignorance, therefore, which is so often complained of, is more owing to a want of opportunity than to a want of capacity or disposition to learn. Let ministers only declare the whole counsel of God, and it will soon appear, that their people are very ready and very able to understand the gospel.

Digitized by Google

Once more: Ministers must declare not only the truth, but the whole truth in their preaching, if they mean to be faithful either to themselves, or to their people. So Paul thought. "I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." He sincerely aimed to represent God and Christ, and heaven and hell, and all beings and all objects in the very same light in which he really expected they would finally appear, at the winding up of the glorious gospel. By this mode of preaching, he told his hearers the truth, and the whole truth; and so did all that lay in his power to save them from ruin, and to raise them to happiness. This was real faithfulness to them, and to himself. And this accordingly gave him inward peace and satisfaction of mind, and made him feel that he had been an honest and faithful minister of Christ. If ministers, then, wish to be pure from the blood of all men, and to gain the approbation of God and of their own minds, they must declare, with fidelity and plainness, the whole counsel of God. Nothing short of this can entitle them to the present character and future rewards of the faithful.

I now beg leave, according to a long-established custom on these occasions, to apply this discourse to my Fathers and Brethren in the ministry.

Reverend Sirs,—My subject suggests one distinguishing mark of ministerial fidelity. And it deeply concerns us to inquire and determine, whether we have this mark in our favor. Let us then seriously ask, and permit conscience to answer, such questions as these—Have we really intended to declare the whole counsel of God, without the least ambiguity or reserve? Have we honestly endeavored, as far as our opportunities and abilities would permit, to make our people know all that we know about the gospel, which comprises all the designs and operations of the Deity? Some, we have reason to fear, never mean to let their people know their religious sentiments, from the day of their ordination to the day of their death. And their people never will know them, until the gospel shall disclose the secrets of all men before the judgment-seat of Christ. There is reason to fear this from a fact which, I believe, many wish to conceal, but which, I presume, none will dare to deny. The fact alluded to is this. The people are much more Calvinistic

Digitized by Google

in their religious principles than the ministers are. There is, perhaps, scarcely a congregation in New England, where the majority are not friendly to our shorter Catechism, and the leading doctrines of the gospel, as they are explained and maintained by Calvinistic divines. But are there not many ministers, who totally explode this scheme of doctrines; and embrace opinions which are absolutely inconsistent with any system of religion, which takes its origin from the eternal purpose or decree of God? And do not such ministers as these make use of every art and subterfuge to conceal their sentiments? Do they not preach in a dark, ambiguous, desultory manner, lest their characters should be distinguished from other men's, and their principles from the true principles of the gospel?

Are we thus, my Fathers and Brethren? — are we of this number, who thus shun to appear in their true characters, and to become transparent to the view of the world? If we are honest men, we have nothing to fear from the light. There is a dignity in transparency, which universally commands esteem and respect. But there is a meanness which wants a name, in a minister's flying to shelters or subterfuges, to hide himself from the public eye. Shall we then, my Brethren, who are the salt of the earth, who are the light of the world, and who hold the torch of divine truth to dispel the clouds of darkness and error from the paths of men; — shall we put out our light, or hide it under a bushel? No: let us trim our lamps, and make them shine, that those who are blind may see, and those who see may be blind.

Our subject next speaks to him, who is this day to commence a steward of the mysteries of God.

Dear Sir, — We have endeavored, in this discourse, to display the nature and importance of a minister's duty, with a particular view to your benefit on this solemn occasion. And if the gospel has taken possession of your own heart, there is nothing which you more ardently wish, than to unfold its divine mysteries for the instruction and salvation of sinners. This important, this delightful service, God seems about to assign you. Such a distinguishing privilege demands your most grateful acceptance, and most faithful improvement. The work indeed is great. And it must appear great to you, if your mind is awake, and looks forward to the final issue of the gospel; which

Digitized by Google

will eventually fix your own soul, and the souls of your hearers in a state of endless joy or endless wo. But having once put your hand to the plow, you must never look back. Your cause is the cause of God and of all holy beings, which therefore must never be deserted. You may expect to be called to great and constant exertions. You must read much, think much, pray much, watch much, deny yourself much, if you wish to possess that knowledge and fortitude, which will enable you to declare the whole counsel of God. This mode of preaching always tends to awaken the enmity and opposition of the human heart, and to raise the resentment and obloquy of sinners against the faithful ministers of Christ. You may therefore lay your account, that some will become your enemies, because you tell them the truth. But let none of these things move you, neither count any object too dear to be sacrificed in the cause of truth. For the value and importance of every created object, is to be estimated according to its tendency to accomplish the gospel scheme; which contains all that is truly valuable to you, or to any other intelligent being. You have nothing to lose therefore by promoting the gospel, which will effectually secure the present and future interests of all its friends. Only take good care of the gospel, and the gospel will take good care of you.

Be entreated then to preach with all possible plainness and freedom. Unbosom yourself to your people. Let them see your heart. Make them feel more or less, in every sermon, the united influence and weight of the whole counsel of God. Aim your discourses directly at their hearts and consciences. And endeavor, if possible, to make them see and feel the gospel, just as they must all see and feel it, at the day of judgment. This is your wisdom, as well as duty. For, please to remember, if you conceal the gospel, the gospel will not conceal you. If you neglect to declare the whole counsel of God, the whole counsel of God shall yet be declared; and, among other dreadful secrets, your unfaithfulness shall be declared before your people, and before the whole assembled universe. Hence says our Lord to his ministers, "There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house tops." Your time is short. You must soon, at longest, take a final leave of the dear people of



Digitized by Google

your charge. If you are unfaithful, how can you bear to leave them? Your conscience will forbid you to say, "I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." And if you cannot bear to leave them, how can you bear to meet them before the supreme tribunal; where the gospel will appear infinitely different from what you represented, and from what they expected? But, on the other hand, if you plainly and faithfully declare the whole counsel of God, you will make the gospel appear in the same light in which it will appear to you, to your people, and to all intelligences at the great and last day. And be assured that that day, however tremendous to others, shall be joyful to you; for that day shall fully reveal, and completely reward your fidelity.

I have only to address one word to the church and people in this place.

Brethren and Friends,—If the gospel involves all your interests for time and eternity, if it must sooner or later be fully known and sensibly felt by every immortal soul among you, can you desire to have it concealed from your knowledge? Can you wish to be deceived in a point of such infinite weight and magnitude? Let me therefore earnestly entreat each of you to adopt the language of good old Eli to the young prophet Samuel, who was sent to him with a heavy message from heaven. "What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me; God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me, of all the things that he said unto thee."

Digitized by Google

# SERMON V.

## MINISTERS WHOLLY GIVEN TO THEIR WORK.

PREACHED AT THE ORDINATION OF MR. ELIAS DUDLEY, TO THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE CHURCH IN OXFORD, APRIL 13, 1791.

---

**Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them.—1 Timothy 4: 15.**

THE apostle having given, in the course of this epistle, a variety of instructions to Timothy, finally sums up the whole in the words I have read. "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them." Which is as much as to say, "Though I have given you many and various warnings and directions respecting your office, yet all these may be comprised in this short and comprehensive injunction, Give thyself wholly to the ministry." Agreeably, therefore, to the spirit of the text and the business of the present occasion, we shall endeavor to illustrate this general truth,—that ministers must give themselves wholly to their work.

In order to set this subject in a plain and practical light, I shall consider *how* ministers must give themselves wholly to their work; and then suggest several reasons *why* they must give themselves wholly to it.

The work of the ministry is a great and arduous work. This appears from the various appellations which the Scripture gives to those who undertake it. Ministers are called laborers and soldiers, to denote the exertions and fatigue which attend their work. They are called overseers and watchmen, to intimate the care and concern which accompany their office. They are



Digitized by Google

called shepherds, and pastors, and teachers, and stewards, to signify the various duties of leading, of guiding, and instructing the people of their charge. A work which contains so many and so important branches of duty, must be a very difficult and laborious work, and, of course, must require those who undertake it, to give themselves wholly to it. But how ministers must give themselves wholly to their work, is the point which falls first under consideration.

And here I shall begin with observing,

1. That ministers must give themselves wholly to their work, by giving their hearts to it.

No man ever gives himself wholly to any business to which his heart is opposed. No man, therefore, ever gives himself wholly to the ministry, while his heart disrelishes the duties and designs of that sacred employment. The minister, then, who gives himself wholly to his work, loves the gospel and feels heartily engaged to promote its great and important designs. He pursues the ministry, "not of constraint, but willingly;" not because no other business happens to fall in his way, but because there is no other business in the world to which his heart is so much attached. He loves his work. He enjoys a pleasure in discharging every branch of duty which belongs to his office. Christ, as a preacher, gave himself wholly to his work. Accordingly, we find him pursuing it with pleasure and delight. He came weary and faint to Jacob's well, but yet he chose to feed and nourish the souls of others, rather than to feed and nourish his own body. For while his disciples went to procure refreshment, he sat down and taught the woman of Samaria, with saving success. And when they returned and invited him to eat, he replied, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

Paul likewise gave his heart so much to the ministry, as to esteem it a great and distinguishing privilege. "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord," says he, "who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." His life was bound up in his work. This he intimates to the Thessalonians. "Brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith: for we now live, if ye stand fast in the Lord." And as his benevolent heart was filled with joy

Digitized by Google

at the prospect of men's being saved, so it was wounded with sorrow and deep distress at the prospect of their being lost. Hence he says to the Jews, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." The truth and sincerity of this declaration appears from another, still more solemn and striking. "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." Nor did he feel less tenderness and concern for those in Galatia, whom he addresses with more than paternal affection. "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." Such are the feelings of those who give themselves wholly to the ministry. Their hearts are so absorbed in their work, that it becomes the source of their highest joys and deepest sorrows.

2. Ministers must give themselves wholly to their work, by giving their thoughts to it.

This the apostle plainly suggests in the text. "Meditate upon these things." Men always meditate upon their supreme object of pursuit. That to which any person wholly devotes himself, naturally engrosses all his thoughts and attention. His mind is perpetually recurring to it, and with difficulty is diverted from it. It follows him into all places and into all companies, and directs the whole course of his conduct. The husbandman, who gives himself wholly to his calling, employs his thoughts more than his hands in his daily business. This lies upon his mind not only in the hours of labor, but in moments of leisure. He is perpetually thinking and contriving how to plan and perform his business with the greatest ease and despatch. He has his fields, his pastures and meadows, in habitual contemplation, and racks his invention to discover the best modes of cultivation and improvement. He lays himself out to provide laborers and all necessary implements to carry on his work. In short, his business employs his thoughts when he lies down, and when he rises up; when he goes out, and when he comes in; when he is at home, and when he is abroad.

So the minister of the gospel should give all his thoughts and attention to his work. He should meditate upon the nature

Digitized by Google

and importance of his business, as well as upon his own peculiar gifts and talents, in order to discover the best rules and modes of conduct for him to observe, in the discharge of his office. He should often reflect upon the circumstances, connections and movements of his people, and endeavor to learn, as far as possible, the peculiar genius, disposition, character and capacity, of each individual. He should watch the most favorable seasons of giving them advice, instruction, consolation and reproof. He should attentively eye the hand of God, that the voice of his discourses may follow the voice of God in his providence. He should lay himself out in his work, and be always studying to furnish himself more and more for every branch of his office. He should embrace every opportunity of acquainting himself with the most perfect and best approved models of preaching, and provide all the helps which he can possibly obtain, both from men and from books. In a word, his eyes, his ears, his heart should be always open to any thing and to every thing, which can either assist or encourage him in his sacred employment.

3. Ministers must give themselves wholly to their work, by giving their studies to it.

The apostle exhorts Timothy to "give attendance to reading." This includes study and thinking, and every mode of intellectual improvement. Ministers should be men of reading and close application. They cannot carry their studies and researches too far, provided they neither injure their health, nor infringe upon the other branches of their duty. But they, like all other men, should always read with a particular reference to their own profession. The farmer, the merchant, the politician and the minister, may read the same books, and read them with equal advantage, if each will read with a direct view to his own particular calling. Ministers may read any book, they may study any subject, which can serve to furnish them for the duties of their office. This should be their invariable and ultimate object in reading both sacred and profane authors.

They are to read the Scriptures, and examine every chapter, every verse, and every word; not merely to direct their own faith and practice, but to direct the faith and practice of others. They are to read the various systems of divinity; not merely to know the various opinions of men, but to discover and main-

Digitized by Google

tain the truth in opposition to error. They are to read philosophy; not merely to shine in that particular science, but to enlarge their views of the works and character of the great Jehovah. They are to read metaphysics; not merely to learn the art of sophistry, but to be able to meet the enemies of truth upon their own ground, and with their own weapons. They are to read history; not merely to know what has happened in the several ages of the world, but to discover the hand of God and the heart of man, in all the revolutions of time. They are to read politics; not merely to become politicians, but to be able to explain and inculcate the various duties of all ranks and classes of men. They are to read deep and well written tragedies; not merely to gratify their taste and consume their time, but to discover the secrets of human nature, and the nearest passages to the human heart. They are to read the most elegant writers in general; not merely to gain flowers to adorn their subjects, but to supply them with the best words and with the best images, to illustrate the sentiments which they wish to inculcate. These spoils, taken from the enemies of truth, they may lawfully employ in the service of God; just as he employed the spoils of his enemies to furnish his tabernacle and temple, and to clothe his priests. And indeed if they do give themselves wholly to their work, they will consecrate all their literary acquisitions and improvements to the work of the sanctuary.

4. Ministers must give themselves wholly to their work, by devoting all their time to it.

They may employ their whole time in their work; because it is a work which may be done, not only on the first and the last, but on every day of the week. In this respect, it is a peculiar employment. Other men are required to labor only six days in seven; but ministers are obliged to spend all their time in the discharge of their office. When God consecrated the tribe of Levi to the priesthood, he consecrated all their time to his service. He discharged them from labor, from war and from government, and required them to pursue their sacred work without interruption and without intermission. A minister's time is all consecrated and devoted time. He has none, therefore, to spend in idleness, in secular employments, or in any pursuits foreign from his own profession. Nor will he find the least occasion of using any of these methods of consuming,

Digitized by Google

or rather, of killing time, if he only fulfils the duties of his office.

Ministers, indeed, should be frugal of time. They should divide it properly, and devote each part to some particular branch of their duty. They should live by rule. They should set apart particular days to particular studies; and particular parts of days to particular duties; and uniformly pursue their stated method, as far as unforeseen duties and avocations will permit. Dr. Doddridge, Mr. Edwards, and other great and useful divines, divided, devoted and employed all their time to the best advantage. Ministers cannot be said, therefore, to give themselves wholly to their work, unless they devote the whole of their time to it. Their divine Master was diligent and indefatigable in his work, and devoted all his time to the ministry. And to justify his conduct, made an observation which all his ministers have particular reason always to remember and regard: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work."

5. Ministers must give themselves wholly to their work, by giving all their interests to it.

The apostles and primitive ministers were obliged to do this literally. They would not have been the ministers of Christ, without literally following his injunction, to forsake all that they had. They did, therefore, actually take the spoiling of their goods joyfully, and give up all their temporal interests, for the sake of fulfilling the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus. But though it seldom happens in these days, that ministers are called in providence to sacrifice all their secular interests to the work of the ministry, yet doubtless some such cases may possibly happen; and whenever they do, it is still the duty of ministers to part with all for the sake of preaching the gospel.

Not to insist, however, on such extraordinary cases, I would go on to observe that every minister is called, at least, to make all his worldly interests subservient to his holy and divine employment. He should plan all his secular affairs so as to render them the least embarrassing and the most useful to his main business. He should aim, in all his worldly concerns, not to become rich in wealth, but to become rich in grace, rich in knowledge, rich in good works. His dress, his house, his fur-

Digitized by Google

niture, his farm, should carry the marks of usefulness as his ultimate and supreme object. If other men are willing to sacrifice their wealth to their honor, or to their pleasure, surely ministers may be willing to devote theirs to the duties of their office. Affluence is more detrimental to ministers than to any other order of men. It directly tends to divert their thoughts, to interrupt their studies, to chill their devotions, to weaken their exertions, and to corrupt their hearts. They in particular, therefore, are charged "not to be greedy of filthy lucre." Money destroyed one of the apostles, and two of the primitive professors. And how many ministers and churches have been destroyed by it since, the corruptions of Rome and of the whole Christian world, will abundantly testify. Ministers then must make their work their ultimate, and their interest only a subordinate end.

6. Ministers must give themselves wholly to their work, by making their secret devotions subservient to it.

They should give themselves to reading, meditation, prayer and self-examination; and in all these secret devotions have a particular reference to their public office. They should read devotional parts of Scripture, and other devotional books, in order to keep their hearts in a proper frame, to discharge the devout and solemn duties which belong to their holy and sacred calling. The book of Psalms, the history of Christ and the apostles, and the epistles to Timothy and Titus, are peculiarly suited to warm, to animate and to solemnize the minds of ministers. These therefore, they should peruse offen, and with great attention, in the hours of retirement. For the same purpose, they should read the lives of great and good men, who were eminent for activity and faithfulness in the service of God. Such examples will tacitly reprove their negligence, and sensibly awaken their resolution, fortitude and zeal in the cause of Christ.

To reading they should join meditation. They should frequently and seriously reflect what it is to be ministers of the gospel; what it is to be intrusted with the charge of souls; what it is to have the eternal interests of men lodged in their hands. By thus reflecting upon the nature and importance of their work, they will naturally be led to consider its obligations, duties, difficulties, and future consequences. And these again will lead them to reflect upon their own conduct; their defects



Digitized by Google

and short comings in duty; their guilt, weakness and dependence; their constant need of grace, of strength, and of direction from the great Head of the church. By such meditations they should fill their mouths with arguments in prayer, that they may grow in grace, in wisdom and prudence; that they may be assisted in choosing, preparing, and delivering their public discourses; and that success may attend all their ministerial labors. In a word, they should always bear their people upon their hearts in secret, as the Jewish high-priest bore the names of the children of Israel upon his breast, when he went into "the secret place of the Most High."

And to all this they should add self-examination. This is the great duty of ministers, who have none to examine them but themselves. And in this duty they should have a particular respect to their ministerial character and conduct. They should lay open their hearts before the bar of conscience, and inquire, whether their public discourses have flowed from love to God and love to men; whether they have declared the whole counsel of God; whether they have watched for souls as those who must give an account; whether they have taken pleasure and satisfaction in their work; whether they have properly endured the afflictions of the gospel; in short, whether, in the general course of their conduct, they have sought to please God or to please man. Thus ministers should make all their secret devotions subservient to their public duties. And they may depend upon it, that their public duties will carry the marks of their secret devotions, and declare to the world, that "they have been with Jesus." This leads me to observe once more,

7. That ministers must give themselves wholly to their work, by living agreeably to it.

Their lives should resemble their sacred character, and be worthy of the imitation of the best of Christians. Accordingly the apostle exhorts them to be "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." As they are to go before others, so they should never take a step which others may not take with safety and propriety. They should be more than free from vice; they should be virtuous. They should be more than virtuous; they should be pious. They should be more than not condemned of the world; they should condemn the world. Their lives should be a living law

Digitized by Google

to all around them. There is a certain gravity, sobriety, solemnity and circumspection, which always appear proper and beautiful in the character and deportment of a minister. This, Smith, in his "Theory of Moral Sentiments," has taken particular notice of, and represented in a striking light. "We cannot expect," says he, "the same sensibility to the gay pleasures and amusements of life in a clergyman, which we lay our account with in an officer. The man whose occupation it is, to keep the world in mind of that awful futurity which awaits them, who is to announce what may be the fatal consequences of every deviation from the rule of duty, and who is himself to set the example of the most perfect uniformity, is the messenger of tidings which cannot, in propriety, be delivered either with levity or indifference. His mind is continually occupied with what is too grand and solemn to leave any room for the impressions of those frivolous objects which fill up the attention of the dissipated and gay. We readily feel, therefore, that, independent of custom, there is a propriety in the manners which custom hath allotted to this profession; and that nothing can be more suitable to the character of a clergyman than that grave, austere and abstracted severity, which we are habituated to expect in his behavior."

Having shown, in various respects, how ministers must give themselves wholly to their work, I now proceed to suggest several reasons, why they must give themselves wholly to it.

1. And here the first reason that occurs is, that by giving themselves wholly to the ministry, they will make the duties of it more easy and pleasant.

Their work is truly great and laborious, which needs to be made as light and easy as possible. And though by giving themselves wholly to it, they will neither omit nor curtail any of its duties and labors, yet they will render these very duties and labors more pleasant and delightful. Those who give themselves wholly to the ministry, make it their supreme object; and men always pursue their supreme object with a certain degree of pleasure and satisfaction. To some men, labor is exceedingly disagreeable and irksome; but to others it is very pleasant and agreeable. The reason is, that some men give themselves wholly to their pleasures, and never labor only when absolute necessity calls. To such men their business is a burden. But

Digitized by Google

to other men, who pursue their business as their chief concern, labor is agreeable and pleasant. So, to some ministers their work is their delight; but to others it is their greatest burden and aversion. Those who do not give themselves wholly to the ministry, consider their office as a toil and fatigue, and perform its various duties as a painful drudgery. They go into their study as into a prison, and never feel themselves at liberty till they leave it and mix with the world. But those who give themselves wholly to their work, find a pleasure in reading, meditation, and retirement. They feed their own minds, while they feed their people with knowledge and understanding, and pursue their own supreme happiness, while they guide and assist their people in pursuing theirs. Their burdens, if they have any, arise not from their business, but from those incidental cares and avocations which divert them from it, or obstruct them in it. If ministers then wish to live a pleasant and agreeable life, let them give themselves wholly to their work, which will render their peculiar office their peculiar happiness.

2. Ministers should devote themselves wholly to the service of their people, because this is the wisest and best way to secure their love and respect.

We love to see a person heartily and zealously engaged for our good. This is human nature. The sick man esteems and values the physician who devotes himself to his service, and stands by him day and night, to watch his every motion, and to extend his healing hand at every call. The client is charmed with his counsel, who exerts all his ingenuity, learning and eloquence, to secure his property, or to save his life. So a people revere and respect a minister, who appears willing to spend and be spent for their eternal welfare. They prefer a warm, lively, animated preacher, to one who is cold, and unconcerned for the good of souls. Accordingly, the first thing which they most critically observe in the minister who is settled among them, is, whether he appears to devote himself wholly to their service; or whether he appears to seek some different and sinister object. And therefore the first step which wisdom and prudence dictate to him, is, to make it appear that he loves his people, and devotes himself wholly to their service. And as long as he invariably pursues their good, and makes their happiness his uniform and supreme object, he will deeply impress

Digitized by Google

upon their minds a most amiable idea of his person and character, which will naturally claim and secure their inward respect and esteem. It is true, indeed, men are so corrupt and depraved, that they may imagine that a minister has become their enemy because he tells them the truth, and even hate and oppose him, for the same things for which they once respected and admired him. Christ, before he was a preacher, grew in favor with God and men; but afterwards he was sometimes applauded, and sometimes hated and opposed. And the apostle tells us that he was hated and opposed by those who once were so passionately fond of him that they would have plucked out and given him their eyes. The same thing has often happened since, and is still to be expected. But yet it remains a truth, that the wisest and best method which a minister can possibly pursue, to gain the esteem and respect of his people, is to give himself wholly to their service.

3. Ministers must give themselves wholly to their work, because this will be the best security against the snares and temptations to which they are exposed.

As men, and especially as ministers, they are very much exposed to danger. For many wish to lead them into those practices which will sully their character, destroy their example, weaken their hands, and discourage their hearts. They should never, therefore, allow themselves to be idle; for this will expose them to every temptation; but industry and activity in the service of God, will be a great and constant security. The industrious man, who gives himself to his proper business from morning to night, is out of the reach of vice and immorality. So the minister, who gives himself wholly to his work, is out of the way of those snares and temptations by which loose and idle ministers are often overcome and destroyed. Nor is this all. For those who give themselves wholly to the ministry, will have no taste for vain company, insipid conversation, fashionable amusements, and refined vices. They will carry about with them a constant and deep-rooted aversion to the manners and spirit of the world. And of this the world will be so fully convinced, that they will never dare to solicit their company in parties of pleasure, amusement, and vice. If ministers then wish, and they certainly ought to wish, to escape the temptations and pollutions of the world, let them firmly resolve to give



Digitized by Google

themselves wholly to their work. For this will be a strong and constant security.

4. Ministers must give themselves wholly to their work, because this is the best way to become extensively useful.

Every industrious man, in every lawful calling, is a useful man. Industry makes the useful farmer, the useful mechanic, the useful physician, and the useful magistrate. And one principal reason why men are so often useless is, that they neglect their own profession, and divide and shift their attention among a multiplicity of objects and pursuits. If ministers, then, indulge themselves in ease, idleness, or dissipation, they may expect to be barren and unfruitful in the vineyard of Christ. But if they give themselves wholly to the ministry, and lay themselves out to fulfil it, they may expect to become able divines, good casuists, and successful preachers. Activity and faithfulness in the service of God, is always accompanied with that constant and ardent desire of success, which has a natural and moral tendency to obtain it. Those, therefore, who have pursued this course in the ministry, have commonly become eminently serviceable in the church of Christ. We have many examples to illustrate and confirm these observations. Paul was remarkable for his labors, and as remarkable for his eminent usefulness and success. Dr. Doddridge, Mr. Baxter, and Mr. Edwards were great and useful divines. And these men, it is well known, were remarkably diligent, laborious, and faithful in the discharge of their office. If others, then, wish to be equally serviceable in promoting the cause of truth and the interests of religion, let them be equally diligent, laborious, and faithful, in their sacred calling.

5. Ministers must give themselves wholly to their work, because they actually engage to do it.

When they take the pastoral watch and care of a particular people, they publicly and solemnly devote themselves to their service. They engage to be the servants of their people, and to employ all their time and strength, all their powers and abilities, in promoting their spiritual benefit. Hence says the apostle, speaking in the name of ministers, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." And again he suggests the same idea to Timothy. "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good sol-

Digitized by Google

dier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of his life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." A minister has no right to make the least reservation of his time, of his talents, of his heart or his hands, but is bound to devote his all to the ministry. If he is, therefore, either idle, or entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, he is guilty of violating his public and solemn engagements. We should all judge so in any other instance. If a hired servant neglects our business, and spends his time in his own, or in idleness, we charge him with a breach of fidelity. A minister then actually defrauds his people of their right, if he gives not himself wholly to their service. I speak not of cases of absolute necessity, which carry their own justification, and equally excuse the apostle Paul, and any other minister of the gospel, for working with his hands. But such cases excepted, every minister is bound by his own solemn vows, to devote himself wholly to the service of God and the good of his people. I must add,

6. That the importance of the ministry requires those who undertake it to give themselves wholly to their office.

The importance of any business is to be estimated according to the magnitude of the objects which are connected with it or suspended upon it. The business of a physician is important, because the lives of men are virtually lodged in his hands. The business of an ambassador at a foreign court is important, because the interests of whole nations and kingdoms are suspended upon his conduct. So the business of a gospel minister is infinitely important, because the eternal interests of men are intrusted to his care. No other business of so much importance, either this side of eternity or beyond it, was ever committed to created beings. We know not that the endless happiness or misery of immortal creatures ever was, or ever will be suspended upon each other's conduct in the invisible world. But here, in the present state, we find that such infinitely important objects are lodged for a time in the hands of ministers. There is not, therefore, any work in the universe, which belongs to creatures to perform, so weighty and important as the work of the ministry. Men must live or die, be happy or miserable to all eternity, accordingly as ministers either fulfil or neglect the important trusts reposed in them.

Digitized by Google

And it is for this reason, that they are so solemnly warned in the sacred oracles, to be diligent and faithful in their work. All the divine warnings and exhortations directed to them, plainly convey the idea, that both their own and their people's salvation is suspended upon their diligence, fidelity, and watchfulness. "Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them," says the apostle to Timothy, and immediately adds, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." In the same strain God speaks to the prophet Ezekiel. "Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman; if when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; then, whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." These solemn warnings and admonitions lay ministers under an absolute necessity of being laborious and faithful in their work. For, if they prove negligent, careless and unfaithful, they and their people must lie down together in everlasting sorrow.

I have now finished what I have to say upon the nature and obligation of ministers' giving themselves wholly to their work, and proceed to improve the subject.

1. We learn from what has been said, that if ministers do

Digitized by Google

give themselves wholly to their work, they will make it appear. This is a conclusion which the apostle draws from the subject. "Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all;" or, as it might be rendered, "that thy profiting may appear in all;" that is, in all thy conduct, and in every branch of thy ministerial office. As it is more difficult for any man to conceal his knowledge, than his ignorance, so it is more difficult for a minister to conceal his faithfulness than his unfaithfulness. If ministers give themselves wholly to their work, they will certainly profit by it, and increase in knowledge, piety and usefulness. They will become more and more wise to win souls, and more and more engaged to do it. The industrious man will thrive; for we are told the "hand of the diligent maketh rich." A faithful, studious, prayerful minister will make advances in knowledge and holiness. His public labors will breathe the spirit of his private studies and devotions. And his devout and exemplary life will give weight and energy to his public addresses.

But the means he employs will more fully discover his ultimate end. View a man's daily conduct, and you will easily perceive his leading object. If you see him rise early, and late take rest; if you see him shun idle company and vain amusements; if you see him apply every part of his property to the best advantage; you will be fully convinced that he gives himself wholly to his business, and determines to be rich. So, if you see a minister who rises early and late takes rest; who loves his study and appears to be at home in it; who avoids vain conversation, and delights in that which is good to the use of edifying; and who appears to partake of the joys as well as of the afflictions of the gospel; you will naturally conclude that he gives himself wholly to his work. Such a minister's profiting will appear to all, and carry convincing evidence to every mind that his work absorbs all his thoughts and attention, governs his views and pursuits, and affords him the highest pleasure and satisfaction in life.

2. We learn from what has been said, that if ministers do not give themselves wholly to their work, they will also make it appear. The means, as we have just observed, will discover the end. If a man is going to a certain place, he will naturally choose the road which will carry him thither. Or if he is seek-

Digitized by Google

ing a certain end, he will naturally employ the means, which will put him in possession of his desired object. And it is by observing this inseparable connection between means and ends, that we are able, in ten thousand instances, to discover the different views, and of consequence, to distinguish the different characters of men. By this criterion, we discover the knave, the miser and the sluggard. And by the same criterion, you may discover the idle and unfaithful minister. If he gives not himself to the ministry, he will give the ministry to himself. And the ministry, it is well known, may be made a very pretty sinecure; that is, an office of ease, of wealth, and of honor, without employment. But if a man should serve himself of the ministry, and make it subservient to his own avaricious, worldly views, he would be very apt to make it appear, at home and abroad, in his own house, and in the house of God. For the means and the end are totally different, and will appear so to every discerning spectator. If a minister does not love to preach, if he does not love to study, if he does not love to promote the cause of Christ and the interests of religion, his general mode of conduct will serve to discover it. For, if he does not love these objects, he will certainly love and pursue others, to the neglect of the labors and duties of his proper business. His proper business he will pursue with coldness and indifference; his supreme object he will pursue with warmth and pleasure. In his proper business, he will appear out of his element; and out of his proper business, he will appear in his element. He will carry with him into all companies, into all places, and into all duties, visible marks of his leading object. For, he "cannot serve God and mammon;" and if he gathers not with Christ he will scatter abroad.

3. We learn from what has been said, why the vineyard of Christ bears, at this day, such a disagreeable and melancholy appearance. If we go into a field which is all overgrown with thorns and nettles, and whose hedges, fences, and stone walls are broken down, we know by its appearance whose field it is, and pronounce, without hesitation, that it belongs to the slothful man, who says, "yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep." So, if we go into the vineyard of Christ, and find where the hedges and stone walls are broken down, and where briars and thorns are sprung up, we must nat-

Digitized by Google

urally conclude that sluggards have been there. And do we not find many such neglected and uncultivated places in the vineyard of Christ? Is it not very much overgrown with thorns and nettles? Are not its walls and hedges very much broken down? But to drop these metaphors, are not the terms of communion and the modes of discipline, in many places, very different from those which Christ himself hath appointed? Are not those sacred ordinances frequently divided, which he hath absolutely united; and those peculiar privileges which he hath given to his friends, bestowed freely and without distinction upon his enemies? Are not gross and fatal errors indulged, if not nourished and fostered in the bosom of some of our churches? Are not open vices and immoralities suffered to spread and prevail in many of our congregations, without being restrained, and what is still more melancholy and shocking, without being condemned and reproved?

Such are the disagreeable and gloomy appearances of the vineyard of Christ at this day. And are not these the fruits, that we should naturally expect from sloth and negligence? If ministers were more watchful, more diligent, more laborious, and more heartily and unreservedly devoted to their work, we might certainly expect better fruits would appear in the garden of the Lord. For, wherever we find better ministers, we find better fruits. I appeal to facts. Go into those parts of the vineyard of Christ where ministers give themselves wholly to their work, and there you will find vice and immorality condemned and reproved, if not restrained; there you will find churches kept in repair; and there you will find a number of warm and lively Christians growing in knowledge and in grace. We are obliged therefore to ascribe, in a great measure though not altogether, the present wretched and guilty state of our churches and congregations, to the negligence and unfaithfulness of ministers.

4. We learn from what has been said, the great criminality of those who sustain the sacred office, but do not give themselves wholly to their work. An idle person in the lowest station of life, who clothes himself and his family in rags, and reduces them to poverty and wretchedness, is very criminal, and carries about with him visible marks of his negligence and guilt. But how much more inexcusable and guilty are idle, negligent,

Digitized by Google

unfaithful ministers, who render both themselves and their people, in the highest sense, wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked! The barrenness of those churches which they ought to have cultivated and enriched, and the leanness of those souls which they ought to have fed with knowledge and understanding, bear witness to their face, and charge them with aggravated guilt. But besides these fruits of their negligence, which are at once both the evidences and aggravations of their guilt; their own voluntary, public, and solemn vows and engagements must be brought into the account, to fill up the measure of their sins. The aggravations arising from both these sources will be fully displayed at the great and last day. Then the skirts of their garments shall be unfolded, and the blood of the souls of the poor innocents, who perished through their negligence, shall be brought to light; and at the same time, the solemn vows and engagements which they violated, shall be fully exhibited to their own view, and to the view of those whom they neglected, betrayed and destroyed. These aggravations of guilt will appear to be peculiar to those who have been negligent and unfaithful in the ministry, and will sink them lower than the lowest of all other classes of men, in the gulf of perdition. Let us all, therefore, my brethren, now judge and condemn ourselves, that we may not be judged and condemned of the Lord. And while we mourn for our past negligence and unfaithfulness, let us resolve to give ourselves wholly to our work in time to come, and to watch for souls as those who must give account.

Permit me now to turn my discourse to him, who is waiting to be introduced into this part of the vineyard of Christ.

Dear Sir, — You have reason to bow your knee in profound gratitude to the Father of mercies, who allows you to choose and enter upon the greatest and best work in the world. Gratitude therefore obliges you to give yourself wholly to the service of God. From this day of your public dedication, to the day of your decease, your time will be consecrated time, your talents consecrated talents, your interests consecrated interests. If you withhold or divert these from your sacred work, you will be guilty of sacrilege; but if you give them wholly to your office, you will make your profiting appear unto all. If then you wish to appear a faithful minister, be one. If you wish to be a

Digitized by Google

successful minister, be a faithful one. And if you wish to go through your work with ease, and to finish it with joy, give yourself wholly to the duties of your office. You have but one object to pursue, and that is your work. Let that have the supreme place in your heart. Let that have a governing influence upon your life. Let that bring every other object and concern into complete subordination. You need not be concerned about riches or honors; for these, so far as they can be either necessary or beneficial to you, shall fall to your lot, if you seek first the kingdom of God and the good of your people. When God requires you to give yourself wholly to your work, he forbids you to take thought for the morrow. When he requires you to be wholly concerned about his honor and interest, he engages to take care of you and of all your concerns. But if you withhold your time, or your labors, or your heart, from this people, you may expect that God will deny you his gracious smiles and presence, and teach you the folly and guilt of unfaithfulness, by those briars and thorns which are the fruits of your own negligence. Be kind then to this people, speak good words to them and devote yourself wholly to their service; and you will justly claim their sincere esteem, veneration and respect. Lay out yourself to be a minister, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. Enter into this vineyard of Christ, with a full determination to labor, and if possible, to repair the waste places. Manure and cultivate this garden of the Lord, and you may expect the dews of heaven to water it. Feed this flock of Christ with the sincere milk of the word, and you may expect that they will grow thereby. Display divine truth with a full blaze of evidence, and you may expect the mists of darkness and error will vanish. How this people shall appear, in this world, at the day of judgment, and to all eternity, depends, under God, on your conduct. Their eternal interests in the most important stage of their existence, are now, for a while, to be lodged in your hands. It is therefore as important that you should be laborious and faithful in your work, as it is that you and they should be saved. Be entreated then, to "take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."

The Church and Congregation in this place, will please to



Digitized by Google

indulge me in a short, but free address, on this solemn occasion.

Dearly Beloved, — If you have been humble in asking, you will be grateful in receiving, one of the richest blessings which Christ has to bestow upon a people, a pastor after his own heart. Such a pastor, we believe, is now waiting to take the care and charge of your souls. And if he should fulfil his great obligations to you, he will lay you under great obligations to him. If he should seek your future and highest good, he will oblige you to seek his present ease and comfort. If he should be laborious and faithful in his work, he will oblige you to assist, to encourage and to support him in it. If he should seek to promote the purity of the church, the destruction of error, and the salvation of sinners, he will oblige you to seek and pursue the same desirable and important objects. And if he should plainly and faithfully preach the pure doctrines of the gospel, he will oblige you to receive and embrace them in meekness and love. In a word, if he should be a good minister, he will oblige you to be a good people.

But if he should fulfil his obligations to you, and you should violate your obligations to him, the consequence to you will be fatal. All his labors, all his self-denial, all his love and compassion, will only aggravate your present guilt and future destruction. God is about to try you. And a most tremendous trial it will be, if he puts a price into your hands to get wisdom, and you have no heart to it, but prefer folly to wisdom, and darkness to light. This is a solemn day to you, and next to that day, when you must give an account how you have received and heard. Between this day and that, you will have a day of grace and space of repentance. And between this day and that, your pastor will have an opportunity of being a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death, to your souls forever. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation!" Hear, and your souls shall live. Refuse, and your souls shall die!

Digitized by Google

# SERMON VI.

## GOD INCOMPREHENSIBLE TO HIS CREATURES.

DELIVERED OCTOBER 10, 1793, AT THE ORDINATION OF MR. CALVIN CHADDOCK, TO THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE THIRD CHURCH IN ROCHESTER.

---

**Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?—Job 11: 7.**

THAT there is a first and supreme cause, who is the Creator and Governor of the universe, is a plain and obvious truth, which forces itself upon every attentive mind; so that many have argued the existence of God, from the unanimous consent of all nations to this great and fundamental truth. But though we may easily conceive of the existence of the Deity, yet his nature and perfections surpass the comprehension of all minds but his own. Our eyes can perceive, without difficulty, the scattered rays of the sun; but if we fix them steadily upon the sun itself, we are immediately involved in darkness by a profusion of light. So our general ideas of the Deity are clear and distinct; but if we take a more steady and particular survey of the divine mind, our mental sight is confused by the greatness and brightness of the object. We commonly, therefore, rest satisfied with more general and familiar views of the Supreme Being, unless some great event, some sudden change, or some pressing calamity, rouse our attention, and excite us to dive deeper into the divine nature and counsel. This was precisely the situation of Job. A great and sudden calamity had turned away his eyes from all second causes, and fixed his whole attention upon the supreme First Cause. He was astonished that



Digitized by Google

God should raise him so high, and in a moment, sink him so low. This led him to pry into the mysteries of divine providence, and to censure the ways of Him, whose ways are past finding out. Zophar, his friend, had impatiently heard his unreasonable complaints; and at length put a question to him, which was exactly suited to silence all his objections. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" This question carries in it the most strong and pointed assertion, that no created natures are able to comprehend the Supreme Being. The single point, therefore, which claims our present attention, is this:

That God is incomprehensible by his creatures.

This truth is too plain to need a labored proof. It rests upon the same evidence, upon which the truth of the divine existence depends. If God be eternal and self-existent, he must be incomprehensible. Every mind revolts from the idea, that creatures should be able to comprehend their Creator, because this would imply that their powers and capacities are equal to his. I shall therefore only point out the various respects, in which God is incomprehensible by his creatures. And here I may observe,

1. That God is incomprehensible in respect to the ground of his existence.

Though God is the first of beings, and owes his existence to no cause out of himself, yet we are obliged to suppose there is some ground or reason of his existing, rather than not existing. We cannot conceive of any existence, which has no ground or foundation. But the foundation of God's existence is neither before, nor out of himself. For, if it were before himself, or out of himself, he could not be the first and self-existent Being. The ground or reason, then, of God's existence must be wholly within himself. There must be something in the nature of the Divine Being which renders his existence absolutely necessary. But what that something is, which is wholly within himself, and which renders his existence absolutely necessary, is above the comprehension of all created beings. It is not the divine will; it is not the divine power; it is not the divine wisdom; it is not, indeed, any divine attribute, but something which lies at the foundation of all the perfections of God, and which can be comprehended only by himself.

Digitized by Google

2. God is incomprehensible in respect to many of his perfections.

In some sense, indeed, all the perfections of God are unsearchable; for they are all unbounded in respect to creatures. Most of the divine perfections, however, are in the strictest sense, incomprehensible; and these deserve particular notice.

Eternity is one. God is eternal. He is said to inhabit, that is, properly and supremely to possess, eternity. He never had a beginning. There never was a time when he did not exist. Now we can easily conceive of a future, but not of a past eternity. We can easily conceive that God should continue to exist forever and ever; for we can conceive the same of ourselves and other created beings. But an eternity *a parte ante*, as some divines call it, that is, a beginningless eternity, surpasses the comprehension of all created intelligences. They know that they had a beginning. They know that all created objects had a beginning. Of this they had a clear conception. But that a being should always exist without any beginning, is what they will never be able to fathom, either in this world, or that which is to come.

The omnipresence of God is another incomprehensible perfection. That God is present everywhere, both the light of nature and of divine revelation fully evince. As all creatures live, and move, and have their being in God, so it is certain to a demonstration, that his presence constantly fills all places throughout his vast dominions. But this immensity of the divine presence transcends the highest conceptions of created beings. They know with respect to themselves, that they move from place to place, that when they are in one place, they are not in another, and therefore that they cannot be in all places at once. But God is equally present with each of his creatures, and with all his creatures, at one and the same instant. This is incomprehensible on any supposition we can possibly make. If we suppose his presence is properly extended, this looks like a plain absurdity. For extension implies figure, and figure implies matter, which we cannot reconcile with our ideas of a pure and perfect spirit. Or, if we suppose the presence of the Supreme Spirit is not extended, and does not occupy space, yet this really surpasses our feeble conceptions. Though our spirits do not occupy space, yet their presence is limited; so that they



Digitized by Google

are totally unable to perceive and operate equally at all place. at once. Hence it is evident that the most exalted creature has nothing in his own circumscribed nature, which can give him an adequate view of the divine omnipresence.

The power of God is as incomprehensible as his presence. We know from the perfection of the divine nature, as well as from the declaration of Scripture, that God can do every thing. His power can meet with no resistance or obstruction. None can stay his hand. His power is incomprehensibly great, both in its nature and effects. The effects of divine power are astonishing. The present created system is very extensive; but were creatures able to comprehend this, yet we can easily conceive that almighty power is able to go on creating world after world, and system after system, within the bounds of unlimited space, until the number and magnitude of created objects should rise above the conception of men and angels. So that we cannot comprehend even the effects which divine power is able to produce. But the nature of divine power is still more unsearchable. It is of such a nature as to give positive existence, or to produce something when there was nothing. Created beings have power only to move, alter, change, or new modify objects. They cannot create or produce existence, in a single instance. The production of a fly, or a worm, or the smallest insect, is as much above their power, as the creation of a world. Creative power, therefore, is utterly incomprehensible. Were it not a fact, we should be ready to say that the Almighty could not produce something out of nothing. And Dr. Cudworth, in his Intellectual System, tells us that this was the general opinion of the heathen philosophers. But the Bible gives us better information, and assures us that this and all other worlds are the production of omnipotent power. This, however, we cannot comprehend; for who can "find out the Almighty unto perfection?" Again,

No one can comprehend the knowledge of God. This is as high as heaven, and deeper than hell; the measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. God knows the number of the stars, and can call them by their proper names. He knows the number of men, of angels, of all created objects. He knows all things that have been, that now are, that will be, or that might be. His knowledge takes in all ob-

Digitized by Google

jects within the compass of possibility. Such is the vast extent of divine knowledge; but the nature of it is still more unsearchable. For God knows all things by intuition, and of consequence knows many things which creatures never have known, and never will know. In particular, he intuitively knows how he exists, how he operates, and how all creatures live, and move, and have their being in him. Such knowledge is wonderful; it is high; we cannot attain to it.

I might now mention the moral perfections of God, whose extent and degree surpass our limited views. For the love of God, which involves all his moral attributes, has produced, and will produce such great and lasting effects, as none of his creatures will be able to comprehend to all eternity. But since the holiness of God and the holiness of the creature, the justice of God and the justice of the creature, the goodness of God and the goodness of the creature, the mercy of God and the mercy of the creature, are all of the same nature, and differ only in their extent and degree, I will not enlarge upon these divine excellences, but proceed to observe,

3. That God is incomprehensible in his great designs.

None of the creatures of God can look into his mind, and see all his views and intentions as they lie there. "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God," and all his designs are profound secrets, until he is pleased to unfold them. And since he has not been pleased to disclose all his purposes, either to men or angels, so none by searching can find out God. His counsels will of necessity remain incomprehensible, until his word or providence shall reveal them to his intelligent creatures. Men and angels, and even Christ himself, have been unacquainted with some of the divine counsels, and perhaps they never will fully comprehend them all. For though God will be perpetually revealing more and more of his secret purposes, yet we can no more conceive of their being all revealed, than we can conceive of eternal ages ceasing to roll. As God is incomprehensible in his designs, so in the next place,

4. He is incomprehensible in his works.

Their nature, number and magnitude stretch beyond the largest views of creatures. The best astronomer is unable to ascertain the number of the celestial bodies, or exactly measure their magnitudes, distances and revolutions. The best natural-

Digitized by Google

ist is unable to discover the various species and properties of all sensitive natures. The best philosopher is unable to comprehend the structure and mechanism of the human body, or even that of the smallest insect. And the best metaphysician is unable to investigate the structure and operation of the human mind, or trace the intimate connection between soul and body, and their powerful influence upon each other. No man knows how he sees, or how he hears, or how he tastes, or how he smells. No man knows how second causes produce their effects; nor how the material system holds together, and hangs upon nothing. The works of the Lord are great, and above the comprehension of all his creatures.

I observe once more,

5. That God is unsearchable in his providence.

We know that whatever God has done, he always intended to do; but we do not know at present all the reasons of his conduct, nor all the consequences which will flow from it. God has caused ten thousand changes to pass over kingdoms, and nations, and private individuals, the reasons and consequences of which will never be fully known before the great and last day. And respecting future events, God has drawn over them an impenetrable vail. We know not what even a day may bring forth. It is true, indeed, we know that our times, and the times of all other beings are in God's hands; but what those times shall be, neither we nor they can so much as conjecture. God's judgments are a great deep, and his ways are past finding out. Clouds and darkness will rest upon his providence, until they are dissipated by the clear light of eternity. Who by searching can find out God? who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?

Having briefly illustrated the general observation that God is incomprehensible by his creatures, I proceed to improve and apply the subject.

1. It appears from what has been said, that in a very important sense God is truly infinite.

To be incomprehensible is the same as to be infinite. It is as proper, therefore, to say that God is infinitely great, as to say that he is incomprehensibly great; to say that he is infinitely good, as to say that he is incomprehensibly good. In the same respect in which God is incomprehensible, he is

Digitized by Google

truly infinite. And we have shown that he is incomprehensible in respect to his creatures, and therefore he is truly infinite in respect to them. But though God be incomprehensible in respect to his creatures, yet he is not incomprehensible in respect to himself; and therefore, notwithstanding he is infinite in respect to his creatures, yet he is not infinite in respect to himself. Who will say that God's present knowledge of himself is imperfect? Or who can imagine that God will eternally increase in the knowledge of himself, and so never attain a complete comprehension of his own nature and perfections? But if this be not true, then what right have we to say that God is absolutely infinite, that is, infinite with respect to himself? Is it not a plain contradiction of terms, to apply absolute infinity to a material object? And why is it not as plain a contradiction in terms, to apply absolute infinity to an immaterial one? If we cannot say, without contradicting ourselves, that a line is infinitely long, or that a globe is infinitely great; how can we say, without contradicting ourselves, that a faculty is infinitely great, or that a quality is infinitely good? If the doctrine of absolute infinity will prove any thing, it will prove the grossest absurdities, in respect both to matter and mind. By this, however, I would not be understood to mean that it is improper for ministers or others to ascribe infinity to God in their religious devotions; but only suggest that we might, by observing the distinction between comparative and absolute infinity, prevent much obscurity, at least in our reasonings about the great and incomprehensible Jehovah.

2. It appears from what has been said, that the incomprehensible nature of the Supreme Being does by no means preclude our having clear and just conceptions of his true character.

His incomprehensibility is the same as his greatness. But does the greatness of any object prevent our having clear and just ideas of it? Because a mountain is larger than a small hill, can we not have as clear and just ideas of a mountain as of a small hill? Though our sight takes in the whole of a small hill, and not the whole of a mountain, yet what we do see of a mountain, we see as clearly as what we see of a small hill. Our ideas of material objects are not in the least obscured by their greatness. And this holds equally true in regard to

Digitized by Google

mental or immaterial objects. Can we not as clearly perceive reason in a man as in a child, in a philosopher as in a peasant, in a Newton or a Bacon as in those of much meaner capacities? Why then should we not as clearly perceive power, wisdom, goodness, justice, or any other natural and moral excellence, in the Fountain as in the streams; in God as in the creature? Where there is the most power, the most wisdom and the most goodness, there these excellences are the most easily and clearly seen. And since God possesses these in the highest degree, therefore they are to be seen in him in the clearest and fullest manner. We find much more difficulty in perceiving small, than great objects. The nature, however, of no object depends upon its greatness, or smallness. Hence we are not to suppose that the nature of the Supreme Being differs from the nature of other intelligent beings, merely because he is incomprehensibly great. Is incomprehensible greatness, smallness? Is incomprehensible perfection, imperfection? Is incomprehensible love, hatred? Is incomprehensible wisdom, folly? Is incomprehensible knowledge, ignorance? How then can the incomprehensibility of divine perfections, obscure our ideas of them? They are not the less, but the more plain and intelligible, for being incomprehensibly great.

This, however, is denied by many. Infidel writers have laid hold of the doctrine of the divine incomprehensibility, in order to throw a veil of obscurity over the divine character, and thereby destroy the first principles of natural as well as revealed religion. Hume, in his dialogues on natural religion, has exerted his "all unhinging subtilty," to confound our ideas of the natural and moral perfections of the Deity. And the sole ground upon which he argues, is the incomprehensible nature of the divine attributes. By abusing this term, he insinuates that there must be an obscurity and uncertainty in all our ideas and reasonings respecting the great, incomprehensible First Cause. He insists that we cannot possibly learn his true character from his works, simply because his nature is incomprehensible. And did incomprehensible mean the same as obscure or unintelligible, it would be difficult indeed to avoid this conclusion. But since the term has a different meaning, every argument drawn from it against our having clear and just conceptions of the Deity, is totally fallacious and inconclusive.

Digitized by Google

We might naturally expect that infidels would wish to make one attribute of God injure another; and endeavor to construe his incomprehensibility into obscurity; but could we expect this from Christian divines? This, however, Christian divines have done. Dr. Brown in particular, supposes that God is incomprehensible, and from thence concludes that there is no analogy between him and other moral agents. Accordingly, upon this ground, he denies that we can frame any just and clear ideas of the divine power, holiness, justice, or any other divine perfection. But if this be true, it is easy to see that we have no medium, by which we can make it appear that God's character is amiable, his laws just, and his conduct right. And if we cannot make this appear, where is our obligation to love his character, obey his laws, and submit to his government; or, in other words, where is our obligation to religion? It is dangerous, in a high degree, to employ the divine incomprehensibility to obscure the divine character, and those essential truths which flow from it.

3. If God be incomprehensible by his creatures, we have no reason to deny our need of a divine revelation.

This is denied by those who deny the divine authority of the Scriptures. They allege that reasonable creatures have no need of any other guide in religion and morality, than the plain, unadulterated light of nature. They suppose, the works and providence of God afford such discoveries of his character and will, as render a supernatural revelation totally needless. They have, therefore, attempted to form a system of religion, which they would insinuate is dictated by the bare light of nature.

But is God incomprehensible? Can none of his creatures penetrate his mind, and discover his views and intentions? Is this true? And is this acknowledged to be true, by those who deny the divinity of the Bible? How, then, upon their own principles, can they deny the necessity of a divine revelation? If God made all things, he made all things for himself. And what ends he proposed in the creation of men and angels, they would never have discovered, unless he had been pleased to inform them by an immediate revelation. Could Adam, in his state of innocence, have known either his duty or his destination, without a revelation of his Maker's will and designs? Would he have had a right to use the fruits of the earth, the

Digitized by Google

beasts of the field, or any of the common bounties of Providence, without an express donation from the great Proprietor of all? If man, therefore, in his first and best estate, stood in need of a supernatural revelation from his Creator, how much more do we, his guilty offspring, stand in need of some better discoveries of the will and gracious designs of our injured Sovereign, than we can possibly learn from his works and providence? The light of nature discovers no atonement for sin, and by consequence, no pardon for sinners. Socrates, and other sober heathens, saw their need of a divine revelation; and this every person must see, who impartially attends to the character of God, and to the character and the state of man. As creatures, and especially as creatures involved in depravity, ignorance and guilt, we stand in perishing need of a revelation from heaven. To deny this revelation, therefore, as being needless, instead of discovering superior wisdom and penetration, betrays the grossest ignorance of God and of human nature.

4. If God is incomprehensible in his nature and perfections, then it is no objection against the divinity of the Bible that it contains some incomprehensible mysteries.

If God reveals himself, he must reveal himself as he is. His revelation, therefore, will naturally bear internal marks of his character, and contain some things mysterious and incomprehensible. The Bible contains no mysteries but such as respect the mode of the divine existence, and the mode of the divine operation. And these mysteries, it ought to be remembered, are only revealed and not explained. It is one thing to reveal a mystery, and quite another to explain it. To say that mysteries are revealed implies no absurdity; though to say that mysteries are explained implies a plain contradiction. But this contradiction cannot be fastened upon the Bible, which only reveals mysteries, and such mysteries, too, as are very necessary and useful. For it highly concerns us to know that God both exists and operates in a mysterious manner, though the knowledge of this will never enable us to comprehend the mysteries themselves. Hence the mysteries contained in the Bible, instead of weakening, serve to establish the credibility of its divine original.

5. If God be incomprehensible, then it is very unreasonable to disbelieve any thing, which he has been pleased to reveal concerning himself, merely because we cannot comprehend it.

Digitized by Google

Though we cannot comprehend God, yet God may comprehend himself; and, of consequence, may know many things concerning himself which we could never have known, unless he had been pleased to reveal them. We are obliged, therefore, to believe those things which God has revealed, though we are not able to comprehend them.

I beg leave here to adduce instances, in a few particulars, which some have denied, simply because they deemed them to be incomprehensible.

God has clearly revealed the mode of his own existence. The doctrine of the Trinity is one of the plainest doctrines in the Bible. It is expressly asserted, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." It is interwoven with one of the Christian sacraments, I mean the sacrament of baptism. We are required to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And it lies at the foundation of the gospel, and runs through the whole economy of redemption. This plain and important doctrine has been denied by many, because they could not comprehend it. But let me ask, can this be a good reason for disbelieving what God has plainly revealed? Why should they not disbelieve the existence of the Deity, because they cannot comprehend the ground of his existence? This they can no more explain than the doctrine of the Trinity. For it is just as easy to conceive that there should be a ground or reason of God's existing in three persons, as of his existing at all. Nay, it is as easy to conceive that God exists a Trinity in Unity, as to conceive that he made all things out of nothing. But it is said the doctrine of the Trinity implies a contradiction. I answer, it no more implies a contradiction than the doctrine of a true and proper creation. Both are mysteries, and both equally incomprehensible. But if we only admit that God is incomprehensible, then we may safely believe that God may be and do what is absolutely above our comprehension. If he has told us that he made all things by the word of his power, we may believe it because he has said it. And if he has told us that he can say I, Thou, and He, and mean only himself, we may believe it because he has said it. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater."

Again: God has told us that his Son, the second person in



Digitized by Google

the ever blessed Trinity, "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." This God has told us, and this we may believe; though we cannot comprehend how the divine and human natures could be personally united.

Again: God has told us that he has formed all his purposes from eternity; and this plain truth we are obliged to believe upon the divine testimony, though we know not what his purposes are. There is no mystery at all in God's forming purposes. It is as easy to conceive that God should form his own purposes as that any other moral agent should form his. It is as easy to conceive that God should form all his purposes from eternity, as that he should form them in time. And it is as easy to conceive that God should reveal this truth as any other in the Bible. Where, then, is the mystery of the divine decrees? And where is the propriety of calling this, rather than any other divine truth in question?

Again: The inspired writers tell us that the scheme which God formed from eternity is absolutely perfect. Solomon says, "I know that whatsoever God doth, it shall be forever; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it." The divine plan cannot be enlarged, diminished, nor, in the least respect, altered for the better; it is absolutely the best possible. Now since God has clearly revealed this truth, it is not presumption to believe it, but presumption to deny it. Though we may imagine there are ten thousand defects and imperfections in the divine scheme, yet we ought to believe what we are expressly told: "God is the rock; his work is perfect." The incomprehensible nature of the divine perfections are no objection against the perfection of the divine plan, but an argument in favor of it. Nothing can clear up the divine conduct but this great truth, that "whatever is, is right."

6. This subject shows us that ministers ought to make it their great object, in preaching, to unfold the character and perfections of the Deity.

This is the object which lies nearest to the heart of God, and which he uniformly and constantly pursues in all his conduct.

Digitized by Google

He made the heavens and the earth, that they might discover his nature and declare his glory. He governs all events, in the course of his providence, to make the inhabitants of the world to know that he is God. In a word, he concerted the astonishing scheme of our redemption, through the sufferings and death of his Son, that the perfections of his nature might be unfolded before all the intelligent creation. This the apostle Paul tells us with the most grateful emotions: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." It was the original purpose of God, that the work of creation should be subservient to the work of redemption; and that the work of redemption should finally issue in the fullest display of his glorious perfections.

Now this is the ultimate design of the gospel, and therefore this should be the ultimate design of ministers in preaching the gospel. The more they exhibit of the divine character and counsels in their public discourses, the more do they fall in with the designs of God, and the more do they answer the end of their appointment. We might naturally conclude from Paul's epistle to the Romans, as well as from his frequent appeals to his hearers, that he dwelt much upon the character of God in his preaching; but we have a more striking evidence of this from the discourse which he delivered at Athens, before a most learned and most venerable audience. "Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, To THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made

Digitized by Google

of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us. For in him we live, and move, and have our being." This discourse upon the omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, foreknowledge, predetermination, universal benevolence and agency of God, Paul delivered, not to aged, full grown Christians, not even to babes in Christ, but to those who were totally ignorant of the first principles of the oracles of God. He could think of nothing more proper to exhibit before ignorant, perishing Pagans, than the true character and incomprehensible perfections of the Deity. And he tells us that he meant to be a profitable preacher, and never kept back any thing which he thought would be profitable to his hearers. According to the opinion and practice of Paul, therefore, the most instructive, practical, and profitable preaching, is that which most clearly and fully displays the divine character. And it is easy to perceive that this must of necessity be the case; for there is not one valuable and important end to be answered by preaching, but what the exhibition of God's character is directly suited to answer.

All religious errors and delusions originate from some false notions of God; and therefore a clear exhibition of the divine character will destroy the hopes of those who are placing their expectations of divine favor upon any false and sandy foundation. Let it be made to appear that God is the supreme disposer of the hearts, as well as the actions of men, and where is the first principle of Arminianism? Let it be made to appear that God is supremely amiable and excellent, and worthy to be loved for what he is in himself, and where is the first principle of Antinomianism? Or let it be made to appear that God is incomprehensibly wise and good, and that he may have sufficient reasons in his own mind, for saving a part, and not the whole of mankind, and where is the first principle of Universalism? Let the divine character be properly exhibited, and the nature, necessity and sufficiency of the atonement of Christ will appear, and the whole gospel scheme be unfolded. Let the divine character be properly exhibited, and the human heart will be disclosed; for the bare view of the divine character, is instead of all other

Digitized by Google

arguments to convince sinners that their hearts are enmity against God. Let the divine character be opened, and the best motives to repentance will be exhibited. Though Job justified himself before men, yet when God by a series of solomn interrogations, gave him a clear view of his great and amiable character, he was melted into contrition and self-abasement. "I have heard of thee, by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Let the divine character be exhibited, and saints will be edified. For the divine character has a transforming influence upon the hearts of Christians, and a powerful tendency to assimilate them to the divine likeness. "We all," says the apostle, speaking in the name of Christians, "We all," beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.".

All obligations to religious duties originate from the excellency and perfection of the divine Being, and therefore the clear exhibition of his character is best suited to lead men to the practice of religion. Hence the apostle exhibits this motive to induce Christians to make an unreserved dedication of themselves to the service of God. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

In a word, if ministers wish to set every creature and every object in its truest, noblest, and most important light; if they wish to form their people for the service and enjoyment of God in this world, and that which is to come; let them make it their main object in all their preaching, to unfold, in the clearest manner possible, the character and perfections of the incomprehensibly glorious and blessed God.

This leads me to apply my discourse to him, who is now to be set apart to the sacred work of the gospel ministry in this place.

Dear Sir,—You are this day to commence a steward of the mysteries of God. These you are to dispense, and not to conceal. For, you very well know that it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful. And faithfulness in a steward of the mysteries of God, principally consists in unlocking, unfolding, and, in the clearest manner, displaying the whole char-



Digitized by Google

acter and whole counsel of God. This is the point in which all faithful ministers are united, and in which they stand eminently distinguished from all unfaithful teachers. Among those who have been allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, some have been faithful and some unfaithful in every age of the Christian church. Some have appeared on the Lord's side and some on man's side. Some have justified the ways of God, and condemned the ways of men; and some have condemned the ways of God, and justified the ways of men. Faithful ministers have spoken for God, but unfaithful ministers have spoken against him. How many thousand volumes have been written, and how many thousand sermons have been preached against the character, the perfections and designs of the incomprehensibly great and glorious God! The mouths of this ungodly world have been always pouring forth their hard speeches against their Creator, Lawgiver and Judge. Ten thousand times more has been said against God, in our rebellious world, than against any other being in the universe. If your heart glows with love to the greatest and best of beings, how will you delight to wipe off the aspersions which have been cast upon the bright and spotless character of the Deity! Unto you is this grace given, that you should preach the unsearchable riches of the gospel of the glory of the blessed God. Prudence prompted by gratitude will therefore never lead you to inquire how you may, in the easiest manner, conceal any part of the divine character or divine will; but, on the other hand, how you may in the clearest and happiest manner possible, declare the whole counsel of God. The same moment in which the gospel shall be committed to your trust, the souls of men will be committed to your trust. And you cannot fulfil one of these trusts without fulfilling the other, nor betray one of these trusts without betraying the other. Be entreated, then, to be faithful, and feed your people with the good knowledge of God. The God whom you will serve in the gospel of his Son is the ever present, the all-seeing and heart-searching God; therefore so speak, not as pleasing men, but God which trieth your heart. Approve yourself to God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth, and giving to every one a portion in due season. In a word, be thou faithful unto death, and God himself, whom you serve, shall be your shield and exceeding great reward.

Digitized by Google

I now turn my discourse to the church and people in this place.

Men and Brethren, — God, in his unsearchable providence, has been pleased to leave you long as a flock without a shepherd. You have been called to pass through many trying scenes, and to surmount great obstacles in the way of the resettlement of a gospel minister. But now a brighter prospect is opening before you, and you are called to rejoice, but to rejoice with trembling. For this man, upon whom your hearts and hopes are fixed, may be set up, like his divine Master, for the fall as well as rising of many in this place. If he proves faithful, as we hope he will, the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed, and the real characters of all will be tried. Are you prepared for the trial? Do you wish to know whether you are friends or foes to that God, whose favor is life, and whose frowns are worse than death? This you must know, this you will know, sooner or later. For God has determined that the inhabitants of heaven, of earth, and of all worlds, shall know how they feel towards his great and amiable character.

Be pleased, then, to open your minds to those divine mysteries which your pastor, in faithfulness to God and in friendship to you, shall clearly exhibit, from time to time, for your instruction and godly edifying. Receive the truth in love, and the truth will make you free; and if the truth make you free, you will be free indeed. If you love God, God will love you, and come and make his abode with you. For he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Let me entreat each individual, therefore, to accept the advice and consolation which Eliphaz offered to Job: "Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee. Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart. If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up; — yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, — and the light shall shine upon thy ways."

To conclude: Let us all remember this, that we must see God. God has laid a foundation to exhibit his whole character before the minds of intelligent beings. And can we suppose that he is not able to carry into execution his great design? He has already made some of his creatures see the glory, and

Digitized by Google

feel the weight of his character. In the other world, the eyes of all his creatures are always open, and their minds always awake. They rest not day nor night from seeing and feeling the presence and perfections of the Deity. This is the only ignorant and stupid part of the creation of God. And we shall not long remain in our present unfeeling, torpid state. Our eyes will soon be opened, never to be closed. Our minds will be awakened, never to sleep again. The present objects which now obscure our sight of God, and divert our attention from him, will soon be removed, and a flood of light will break in upon our astonished minds. Then it will be as impossible not to see God, as not to exist; and as impossible not to feel the weight of his character, as not to see it. But who, that are enemies to God, can see him and live? For our God is a consuming fire. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Now is the only time for sinners to become reconciled to God, and secure his favor. Therefore, "as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Amen.

Digitized by Google

# SERMON VII.

## A WISE PREACHER AIMS TO MOVE HIS HEARERS.

PREACHED AT THE ORDINATION OF MR. ELI SMITH TO THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE CHURCH IN HOLLIS, N. H., NOVEMBER 27, 1798.

---

The words of the wise are as goads.—Eccl. 12: 11.

SOLOMON was a man of superior wisdom, which he displayed in the beginning of his reign, as a prince; and in the close of his reign, as a preacher. Having passed through a great variety of scenes, and collected a large stock of useful knowledge, he was eminently qualified to preach, with peculiar pungency, upon the vanity of the world, and the importance of religion. This distinguishing quality, which discovers the strength and clearness of his mind, and characterizes all his writings, justly entitles him to the highest rank among the sacred teachers. Accordingly, Ezra, or some other inspired writer, tells us that he not only "taught the people knowledge," but taught them with so much force and pungency that his words were "as goads, or nails fastened" by those prophets, or "masters of assemblies," who received their sentiments and language from the immediate inspiration of the chief "Shepherd and Bishop of souls." Though none who are destitute of the wisdom of Solomon can expect to reach his supreme excellence in preaching, yet every wise minister will imitate his noble example, and endeavor to penetrate and impress the minds of his hearers. And to illustrate this general observation, I shall show,

I. That every wise preacher will aim to impress the minds of his hearers; and,

II. How he will preach, in order to attain this desirable object.



Digitized by Google

I. I am to show that a wise preacher will aim to impress the minds of his hearers.

By a wise preacher, we mean one who resembles the royal preacher, in some of his most amiable and distinguishing qualities. Solomon was a man of genius, of learning, and of piety. He understood the nature and tendency of all sensible objects. He was thoroughly acquainted with human nature. He knew the feelings of all men, under all circumstances and conditions of life. He knew the various springs of human action, and the various avenues to the human heart. In a word, he knew every thing necessary to penetrate and impress the minds of both saints and sinners. These excellent ministerial qualifications, which adorned and distinguished the royal preacher, in some measure adorn and distinguish all who are wise to win souls. They have the same kinds of knowledge, though not in the same degree. Hence we may presume that all wise preachers will aim to penetrate and impress the minds of their hearers. But this will more fully appear, if we consider,

1. Every wise preacher knows that unless he impresses the minds of his hearers, he can do them no good by his preaching. Hearers must feel what they hear, or what they hear will be like sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. That discourse which fails of penetrating the mind, immediately vanishes, without producing any desirable or permanent effect. It is like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up. The principal design of the preacher is lost upon the hearer, unless he makes the hearer feel the truth and weight of what he delivers. The wise preacher, therefore, always means to penetrate the minds of those to whom he speaks. He no further regards their eyes, or their ears, than only, by these avenues, to convey the truth to their minds, where he means to make the deepest impression, and produce the greatest effect.

2. Every wise preacher knows that his hearers will not feel the truth and importance of what he says, unless he makes them feel it. Hearers look upon it as the part of the preacher to make them feel. They mean to be passive in hearing, unless he makes them active. If he appears indifferent about their feeling, they think they may be equally indifferent about it. They never mean to invite him to speak, but intend that he shall invite them to hear. They never mean to warm his mind,

Digitized by Google

but expect that he should warm theirs. This natural dulness and deadness of hearers, the wise preacher knows he must encounter and overcome, in his preaching. And, therefore, he is sensible that he must move, before they will move; that he must feel, before they will feel; that he must seek his end, before he can possibly attain it. Accordingly, he always endeavors, if possible, to penetrate and impress the minds of his hearers. This leads me to show,

II. How he will preach, in order to attain this desirable object.

When any person proposes a certain end, the end which he proposes, naturally suggests the proper means to accomplish it. This holds with respect to a wise preacher, who makes it his object to penetrate and impress the minds of his hearers. For,

1. This end will naturally lead him to use the most proper style in preaching. He will choose the best words, and place them in the best order, to enlighten the mind and affect the heart. When any person means to impress the mind of another, his design always dictates a natural style, which is the most intelligible and the most forcible. The general, who means to be heard and regarded, speaks the language of authority. And the beggar, who means to be heard and pitied, speaks the language of distress. They both speak in the words in which their thoughts and feelings are conceived, and therefore they both speak the spontaneous language of nature, which all understand and most sensibly feel.

The preacher, like every other person, always thinks in words; and the words, in which he thinks upon his subjects, are the words to be used in his discourses. Could our thoughts drop from our pens, or from our lips, in the very words in which they first rise in our minds, we should write and speak in the most easy, natural and forcible manner. We often lose the energy of our thoughts and feelings, by trying to express them in the language of art, instead of the language of nature. Why do we find it so difficult to describe our past feelings, in the view of a great, or terrible, or sublime object? The principal reason is, we have lost our feelings, and, of consequence, the proper language to describe them. The prophets and apostles teach us the force of unpremeditated expressions. They took no thought what they should say or write, but re-

Digitized by Google

ceived both their ideas and words from divine inspiration. Accordingly, we find no language so easy, so natural, so sublime, or so forcible as theirs. Their words are as goads, quick and powerful, sharper than a two edged sword. When any person speaks as he thinks and feels, he speaks the language of nature, which is always understood and always felt. A bare exclamation will often convey more determinate ideas, and make a deeper impression, than the most neat and well turned period. The wise preacher, therefore, who means to penetrate and impress the minds of his hearers, will use a natural, plain, penetrating language, which all can understand, and which all must feel.

2. His design to penetrate and impress the minds of his hearers, will lead him to exhibit great and interesting truths. All truths, whether agreeable or disagreeable, affect and impress the mind, in proportion to their magnitude. The wise preacher, therefore, will always exhibit those truths which are either great in themselves, or great in their connection. The association of ideas is extremely intimate, and extremely forcible. The most trivial object may be placed in such a connection, and set in such a light, as to appear and feel very weighty and important. The flying of a sparrow, or the falling of a hair, considered as the object of the divine attention and government, becomes greatly interesting. The inspired writers mention some of the smallest and meanest objects in nature. They speak of worms, and flies, and frogs, and serpents; but they speak of them as the servants of God, and ministers of his vengeance, which gives them real magnitude and importance. All the writings of Solomon abound with observations on common and familiar objects, which are placed in a striking and interesting light. He represents all the scenes, concerns and objects of time, in such a near and inseparable connection with death, judgment, and eternity, that they all appear unspeakably interesting to the highest as well as to the lowest of mankind. This is the method which every wise preacher will employ, to impress the minds of his hearers. He will exhibit such truths, as, either by their own weight, or by their natural connection, will find the nearest way to the human heart. He will bring much of the character, perfections, and designs of God, into his public discourses. He will preach Christ in the greatness of his nature, and in the

Digitized by Google

glory and grace of his mediatorial character and works. He will exhibit man in the dignity of his nature, and in the importance of his destination. And he will unfold the scenes of a general judgment, and of a boundless eternity, in their own native awful solemnity. Now the truth respecting every being, and every creature, and every object, in such a serious connection, is infinitely important. The wise preacher, therefore, who has an instinctive discernment of the nature and connection of all divine truths, whether great or small, will always preach something which is weighty and interesting, and which will naturally lead to penetrate and impress the minds of his hearers.

3. For the same purpose, he will explain divine truths, and describe divine objects. A minister may preach about divine truths, and about divine objects, without explaining the former, or describing the latter. But preaching about any truth, or any object, is cold and uninteresting. It may, perhaps, gratify the ear, or please the imagination; but it will never enlighten the understanding, awaken the conscience, or raise the affections. To make objects affecting, they must be described; and to make divine truths interesting, they must be explained. The wise preacher, therefore, will not barely preach about the perfections, about the commands, about the purposes, or about the agency of God; but he will explain these truths, and endeavor to make his hearers understand and feel them, in their nature, connection, and importance. He will not barely preach about heaven, and about hell; but he will describe the state of the blessed, and the state of the damned, in the most clear and striking contrast. He will not barely preach about saints, and about sinners; but he will describe the character of the saint, and the character of the sinner, and trace these two opposite characters in all their various appearances and attitudes. He will describe the feelings of the saint, in light and darkness, in hope and fear, in joy and sorrow, in a growing and in a declining state. And, with equal plainness, he will describe the feelings of the sinner, in prosperity and adversity, under awakenings and convictions, and in the very act of turning to God, and embracing the gospel. He will tell every hearer how he has felt, and how he still feels. He will enter into every bosom, and search the most secret corners of every heart. And this will make his words as goads, or nails, which fasten and clinch upon



Digitized by Google

every mind. The hearer always feels, when the preacher hits him; and he always hits him, when he describes his character. Elijah often described Ahab, and Ahab felt the description; and therefore he said, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" The Jews felt the preaching of Christ, which described their characters, and pierced them to the heart. There is always a peculiar pungency in that preaching which explains divine truths, describes divine objects, and distinguishes human characters.

4. The wise preacher, who intends to impress the minds of his hearers, will arrange divine truths, and exhibit divine objects, in such an order, as to reach every power and faculty of the soul, in its proper turn. The understanding is the inlet to the other powers of the mind. No objects or truths can impress the mind, unless they are first perceived by the understanding. The wise preacher, therefore, will address the understanding before the conscience, and the conscience before the heart. This is the order of nature, and this order must be observed, to make the deepest impression on the human mind. When the understanding is informed, and the conscience awakened, then the affections may be raised as high as possible. There is no danger of raising the affections too high, by the exhibition of truth, though there is nothing else that can raise them higher. The simple truth respecting God, and Christ, and heaven, and hell, will raise the love, and gratitude, and joy of saints to the highest pitch. And the same simple truth, respecting the same great and glorious objects, will raise the enmity, and fear, and distress of sinners to the highest degree. Instruction should always go before declamation. It can answer no valuable purpose, to inflame the passions before light is thrown into the understanding and conscience; but rather serves, on the other hand, to produce the most fatal effects. Many souls, no doubt, have been destroyed by this mode of preaching. To raise the fears, and then the hopes of sinners, without exhibiting a proper portion of divine truth, only serves to make them build upon the sand, and to fill them with a momentary joy, which must end in everlasting sorrow. The wise preacher, therefore, will instruct in order to affect, and enlighten in order to inflame.

5. The wise preacher, who means to impress the minds of his hearers, will always apply his discourse according to their particular characters. What belongs to saints, he will apply to

Digitized by Google

saints; and what belongs to sinners, he will apply to sinners. He will not leave it to his hearers to apply his discourses, but he will apply them himself, and in such a manner too, that each individual shall receive a proper portion of divine truth. He will not only make the general distinction between saints and sinners, but the particular distinction between the various individuals of each of these two classes of men. There are both saints and sinners, of various characters and conditions. There is nothing will affect a saint, like a particular application of divine truth to his own particular case. All truths will not equally apply to all saints. Some truths more properly apply to the negligent saint; some to backsliding saints; some to the mourning saint; and some to the growing and rejoicing saint. And in order to impress the minds of saints, of such various characters and conditions, the preacher must apply divine truths according to their various and particular cases. On the other hand, in order to impress the minds of sinners, a particular application of divine truths to their particular characters, is equally necessary. Some truths must be applied to profane sinners; some to skeptical sinners; some to moral sinners; some to self-righteous sinners; and some to awakened and convinced sinners.

The Bible abounds with particular applications to particular characters; and it is this which renders it so penetrating and convincing to every class of readers. Almost every promise and threatening is directed to a correspondent character. The saint is described, who is comforted; and the sinner is described, who is condemned. No saint can apply any Scripture promise to himself, without finding in himself the Scripture character, to which the promise is made. Who can apply the promises in the fifth of Matthew to himself, without knowing his own particular character? None but the pure in heart, can apply the promise to such. None but those who mourn, can apply the promise to such. None but the meek, can apply the promise to such. None but those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, can apply the promise to such. None but the merciful, can apply the promise to such. And none but peace-makers, can apply the promise to such. When these or any other promises in the Bible, are applied to their correspondent characters, saints will feel their force, and derive light and comfort

Digitized by Google

from them. But when they are misapplied, they comfort those who ought to be made sad, and make sad those who ought to be comforted. So, on the other hand, a sinner will feel the force of no threatening, unless it corresponds to his own particular character. The threatening to the hypocrite comforts rather than convinces the profligate sinner; and the threatening to the profligate sinner comforts rather than convinces the moral and self-righteous sinner. In short, no sinner will feel the force of the preacher, until he applies that particular truth to him, which corresponds to his particular character. But when any truth is applied to any sinner, which corresponds to his particular character, he will keenly feel its irresistible energy. When the preacher describes and condemns his particular course of sinning, or describes and destroys his particular ground of confidence, he will feel his words to be goads and nails and spears to his soul. No sinner can help feeling those truths which condemn his character, and destroys his hopes. Whatever truth fastens guilt upon the sinner, destroy his hopes; and whatever destroys his hopes, destroys his foundation; and when his foundation is destroyed, he must fall. Felix trembled when Paul applied the truth to his particular character. Paul himself lost all his hopes, by a particular application of a particular precept. The promising young man was filled with grief and despair by the particular injunction of a particular duty. And three thousand souls on the day of Pentecost, were struck under deep conviction, by the particular application of divine truth to their particular characters. The wise preacher, therefore, who means to penetrate and impress the minds of his hearers, will be very particular in the application of his discourses. He will handle the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, with skill and dexterity, and strike every hearer in the most tender and vulnerable part. This is the most difficult, but yet the most important point in preaching. Whoever attains this art, will be a powerful and pungent preacher. His words will be like goads and nails, which will wound, if they do not heal, and which will destroy, if they do not save, every hearer.

Digitized by Google

IMPROVEMENT.

1. We learn from what has been said, the importance of ministers' being good men. Piety is necessary, both to dispose and enable them to penetrate and impress the minds of their hearers. Men of piety know more about the human heart than others. They know the views and desires and hopes and refuges of sinners, under all circumstances. This enables them to direct the sword of the Spirit to their most tender and defenceless parts. They know how to strike at the foundation of their false hopes. They know their haunting-places, and are able, by the proper exercise of spiritual weapons, to destroy their strongholds, bring down their high thoughts, and lay them defenceless before God and their own consciences. And with respect to saints, they have a fellow feeling with them, and know how to comfort, quicken, animate and direct them through all their outward and inward conflicts and enjoyments. This experimental acquaintance with the human heart is the best qualification for a plain, searching, pungent preacher. And it is this only, which will dispose a man to preach plainly and faithfully. Many preachers, we have reason to fear, daub with untempered mortar; and prophesy smooth things, because they are afraid of offending their people, by a plain and pungent application of divine truth to their hearts and consciences. But supreme love to God, and a tender concern for the good of souls, takes away this fear of man, and emboldens a minister to exhibit and apply divine truths in the most plain and pungent manner.

2. We learn from what has been said, the importance of ministers' giving themselves wholly to their work. If they mean to penetrate and impress the minds of their hearers, they must exhibit, in the course of their preaching, a rich variety of divine truths. But they will soon lose a variety, and fall into a sameness in preaching, unless they constantly improve their minds in the knowledge of the doctrines and duties of religion, by reading, meditation and prayer. They must teach themselves, if they would teach their people. They must grow in knowledge, if they would feed their people with knowledge and understanding. They must warm their own hearts with divine truth, if they would warm the hearts of their hearers. They



Digitized by Google

must converse much with invisible and divine objects, if they would impress the minds of their hearers with a clear and realizing sense of eternal realities. A preacher always carries his habitual views and feelings into the pulpit. If he neglects his proper business, and pursues the common concerns of life, he will lose that holy fire and pathos, which is absolutely necessary to penetrate and impress the minds of men.

3. We learn from what has been said, the manner in which a minister should appear and speak in the pulpit. His voice, his looks, his gestures, and his whole deportment, should be wholly governed by his ultimate end, which is to penetrate and impress the minds of his hearers. This is an infallible guide. For while he means to penetrate and impress the minds of his audience, he will necessarily avoid every unnatural tone, unmeaning expression, and insignificant action. While he means to be natural, he will be natural. While he means to be significant, he will be significant. While he means to impress, he will impress. While he aims at the understanding, he will penetrate the understanding. While he aims at the conscience, he will penetrate the conscience. While he aims at the heart, he will penetrate the heart. The preacher always discovers his ultimate aim to every discerning hearer. His tone, his air, his attitude is always correspondent to the impression which he means to make. If he means to attract the eyes of the congregation, his deportment will proclaim it. If he means to please the imagination, and gain the esteem and applause of his hearers, his voice, his countenance, his language, and all his attitudes will discover it. Or if he means to promote the instruction, conviction and edification of his people, he will practically tell them so, by the manner, as well as matter, of his preaching.

4. We learn from what has been said, that it is not very material, whether a minister preaches with notes, or without. If he aims to impress the minds of his hearers, he may attain his end, by either of these modes of preaching. If he writes and reads his sermons, he may have as good sentiments, as good language, and as good feelings, as if he preaches extempore, without study, or premeditation. And if his discourses are filled with important sentiments, which are arranged in proper order, expressed in proper terms, and delivered with proper

Digitized by Google

feelings, they can never fail of being pungent. It is true, he may sometimes preach better, if he does not write and read his sermons, than if he does. But yet it is equally true that he may sometimes preach not half so well without as with writing and reading. Extempore discourses often have more heat, but less light, than written ones. It is difficult, on the whole, to determine which of these modes of preaching has the most advantages, and the fewest disadvantages. This must principally turn upon the peculiar taste of the hearers, and the peculiar talents of the preacher, who ought to be well acquainted with these two points, and to govern his conduct accordingly.

5. We learn from what has been said, the great absurdity of those ministers, who studiously avoid penetrating and impressing the minds of their hearers. Preachers in general are so well acquainted with human nature, and the great design of preaching, that they are capable of constructing and delivering their discourses in such a manner, as can scarcely fail of reaching the hearts and consciences of men. But many seem to be afraid of producing this effect, and accordingly take pains to avoid it. They mean to please, rather than to penetrate the minds of their hearers. And to accomplish this absurd and pernicious purpose, they make use of various means.

One is, to preach in a style above the comprehension of their hearers. This is a fault, from which the most plain and pungent preachers are not wholly free. No minister, perhaps, can always think of those words and phrases, which are levelled to the meanest capacity, and which ought always to be chosen, in explaining and inculcating the great and interesting truths of the gospel. One of the greatest masters of the English language, in his advice to a young clergyman, observes, that a plain and easy style, which is intelligible to the lowest class of hearers, is proper for the pulpit, and may be used before the most learned and polite assembly. But some preachers appear to choose a style which buries their ideas, and, of course, conceals their meaning from the understanding of their hearers. This takes off the whole force and pungency of divine truth, and is a gross perversion of the great end of preaching. The words of the wise are as goads, but the words of the unwise are smoother than oil.

Another way to prevent divine truth from making a too pen-

Digitized by Google

etrating and painful impression upon the minds of men, is, to deliver it with a certain easy, graceful negligence. This mode of speaking is extremely agreeable to people in general, because it flatters them with the idea that it is of very little importance whether they believe, or disbelieve the doctrines of the gospel, or whether they perform or neglect the duties of religion. And so long as the preacher conveys this idea, and, by his own ease and negligence, indulges theirs, he completely gratifies their desire of hearing, and prevents their fear of feeling divine truths. People love to hear, but they hate to feel; and therefore they admire those ministers, who preach as though they preach not; and give them leave to hear, as though they heard not. Accordingly, some preachers seem to be very fond of acquiring this mode of speaking, which will please their hearers, without disturbing their consciences.

Another way, which answers the same purpose, is, to preach smooth things, and silently pass over the more penetrating and disagreeable truths of the gospel. Some ministers seem to take peculiar pains to avoid saying any thing about the character of God, the decrees of God, the sovereignty of God, the agency of God upon the hearts of men, the character of men by nature, and the immediate duty of all to yield unfeigned obedience, and unconditional submission, to their great Creator. They studiously avoid mentioning these truths, not because they are ignorant of their nature and tendency, but because they wish not to penetrate and impress the minds of their hearers. And lest their smooth style, and smooth delivery, and smooth sentiments, should not effectually prevent the painful feelings of their hearers, they wholly omit the application of their discourses. They take pains not to disfigure their sermons, by the obsolete modes and phrases of doctrines, divisions, uses, or inferences. They throw their sentiments together in such a loose and desultory manner, that their discourses neither require, nor admit, a particular application to particular characters. This totally prevents their hearers from perceiving the connection, and feeling the force of the few truths which they actually deliver.

These are modes of preaching which many employ, and which, we presume, none can justify. Solomon and Christ, the prophets and apostles meant to penetrate and impress the minds

Digitized by Google

of their hearers; and, by the manifestation of the truth, to commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. These are examples, which it is wise in preachers to follow, though it should give pain and even offence to their hearers.

6. If it be the wisdom and duty of ministers to penetrate and impress the minds of their hearers, then they have no reason to complain of the most close and pungent preaching. This is disagreeable to human nature, and people are very apt to complain of it. Ahab, king of Israel, hated the plainness and pungency of the prophet Micaiah. And he spoke it out, "I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." Nor was he alone in disliking plain and pungent prophets. The people were of the same disposition, for which God severely reproves them by the mouth of Isaiah. "Go write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come forever and ever: That this is a rebellious people, which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits." Human nature is still the same. People now are disposed to find fault with ministers for being too plain and pointed in preaching. There is not, perhaps, a single congregation in this land, who are all willing to have the great and essential truths of the gospel clearly explained to them, and strongly impressed upon them. There are many, in most places, who will either leave their minister, or cause their minister to leave them, rather than to suffer him to penetrate and impress their minds by divine truth. Such flying from pungent to smooth preachers is a dreadful thing. God represents it so in his own people. "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so." If ministers are right, in preaching plainly and pungently, then people are certainly wrong in complaining of it. They act a most unreasonable as well as sinful part. Pungent preaching is for their own good, and they ought to desire it, and seek after it. It is their highest interest to have their minister penetrate their hearts, and discover to them the true state of their souls. They always desire such plainness and fidelity in other men, whom they employ to promote their temporal good. They wish their attorney to examine their

Digitized by Google

cause with care, discover every flaw, and tell them the plain, naked truth. And they heartily desire their surgeon to probe their wounds to the bottom, and apply the most effectual remedies, though ever so painful and distressing to endure. Why then should they complain of their minister, for dealing plainly and faithfully with their souls? This is an absurdity in its own nature, an injury to their minister, and may be eternal destruction to themselves.

7. If it ought to be the aim of the minister to penetrate and impress the minds of his hearers, then there is blame somewhere, if their minds are not penetrated and impressed. Either the minister does not aim to impress their minds, or they mean to resist the impressions of divine truth. But if the minister really means to impress the minds of his people, it will be very difficult for them not to feel the force of his preaching. "The words of the wise are as goads." This means, at least, that the words of the wise preacher will generally penetrate and impress the mind. It is true, hearers may be so inattentive and stupid, as not to understand the great truths of the gospel, when plainly and pungently delivered; and in that case, their minds will not be penetrated and impressed. But this rarely happens. A plain, pungent preacher will scarcely ever fail of making sensible impressions upon the minds of his people. The impressions, indeed, may be extremely different upon different persons. Some may feel pleased, and others displeased. Some may feel happy, and others unhappy. Some may feel comforted, and others feel reproved and condemned. Some may feel their hopes enlivened, and others feel their hopes totally destroyed. If such impressions as these are not made upon the minds of hearers, it is generally owing to the want of pungent preaching. The blame, in the first instance, falls upon the minister. And he must be exceedingly criminal to preach so as to soothe and stupefy, rather than to penetrate and impress the minds of his people. But, on the other hand, the blame will fall on the hearers, if they remain stupid and unfeeling under plain and pungent preaching. This is a sin which exposes those who are guilty of it, to the heaviest condemnation. "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish."

Let me now apply the thoughts which have been suggested, to him for whom they were principally designed.

Digitized by Google

Dear Sir, — You are this day dedicating yourself to the sacred and important work of preaching the gospel. Preaching is to be your business. And the business of preaching is to penetrate and impress the minds of men, by the force of divine truth. Make this, therefore, your supreme object in all your discourses. Never keep back any thing, which you verily believe will be profitable and penetrating. Shun not to exhibit, and to apply the great truths of the gospel to the minds of your people. Let their aim and desire be what it may, in hearing; let it be your aim and desire, in preaching, to fasten truth upon their consciences. Spare no pains in preparing your discourses, and neglect no proper method to make them pungent. The way is already paved for you. Your worthy and venerable colleague has set you an example of great plainness and pungency in preaching. And his success enforces his example.

You know, by your own experience, we trust, the natural stupidity, blindness and obstinacy of the human heart. And you know, that the word of God is mighty to bow and subdue the hearts of men. This knowledge will both qualify and dispose you to preach in the most plain and pungent manner. Nothing but a desire to please, or a fear to offend, can prevent your being a plain, penetrating, searching preacher. But these powerful temptations to unfaithfulness, you must, you will, constantly and obstinately resist. You come into the field in a favorable season, when it seems to be white already to the harvest. Be industrious and faithful, and you may expect a rich harvest of souls, who shall be your joy here, and your rejoicing forever.

One word to this numerous assembly will conclude my discourse.

If the words of the wise and faithful ministers of Christ be so powerful and penetrating as we have heard, how much more irresistible and insupportable will the words of Christ himself be, at the great and last day! Then he will tell sinners all that they ever heard, as well as all they ever did in their lives. Then he will make them hear all the sermons which they had neglected to hear, and make them feel all the truths which they had refused to feel. And then he will give divine truth such an energy, as to penetrate and impress their guilty consciences to all eternity. This will be a source of intolerable misery.

Digitized by Google

"The keen vibration of bright truth is hell."

Let all, therefore, who have hitherto resisted the preached gospel, be entreated to hearken to it speedily, while it may be a savor of life unto life to their souls. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." The gospel will, sooner or later, penetrate the hearts of sinners. If they resist the force of it in time, they must feel the weight of it in eternity. "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!" Amen.

Digitized by Google

# SERMON VIII.

## FAITHFUL MINISTERS SEEK THE SALVATION OF THEIR PEOPLE.

ORDINATION OF REV. JAMES TUFTS, WORDSBOROUGH, VT., NOVEMBER 4, 1795.

---

For I seek not yours, but you. — 2 Corinthians 12: 14.

THE false teachers who had crept into the church of Corinth, endeavored to sink the reputation of the apostle Paul. This laid him under the disagreeable necessity of speaking in his own defence. He first reminds the Corinthians of the miracles which he had publicly wrought, to confirm his divine mission. He next appeals to the reproaches, necessities and persecutions which he had cheerfully endured in promoting the cause of Christ. And, in the last place, he meekly but confidently professes his pure and disinterested motive in preaching the gospel. "Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you; for I seek not yours, but you." Though his enemies charged him with preaching from mercenary motives, yet he was conscious to himself that he had preached with a uniform desire to promote the salvation of souls. And as in water face answereth to face, so does the heart of one faithful minister to another. They all propose the same noble and benevolent end in preaching, that the apostle Paul proposed; though they are far from being agreeably wise, faithful and successful in pursuing it. Agreeably, therefore, to the spirit of the text, I shall endeavor to illustrate this plain and practical truth; that faithful ministers preach the gospel with a desire to promote the salvation of souls.



Digitized by Google

The great apostle frequently and solemnly declares that this was his governing motive in preaching the gospel. To the Corinthians he says, "Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you; for I seek not yours but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." Again he demands, "Think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? We speak before God in Christ; but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying." To these same persons he makes the same profession, in his first epistle to them. "Though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yea, wo is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. What is my reward, then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel. For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law; to the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." When he had called the elders of the church of Ephesus to Miletus, he said unto them, "Ye know, from the first day that I came to Asia, after what manner I have been with you, at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews; and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." His appeal and profession to the Jews was still more

Digitized by Google

solemn and striking. "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh." "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."

Thus Paul uniformly and sincerely aimed, in preaching the gospel, to promote the salvation of his hearers. And this is the great object which all faithful ministers pursue, in the course of their ministry. Like the primitive preachers, they "warn every man, and teach every man in all wisdom; that they may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." They consider their hearers as probationers for eternity, and labor to promote their future and eternal good. This is so evident that nothing further need be said to illustrate it. But yet it may be proper and useful, on this occasion, to inquire why faithful ministers preach the gospel with a desire to save the souls of men.

In answer to this inquiry, I would observe, first: Faithful ministers desire to reach the end of their appointment. Christ hath let them know that he instituted their sacred order to prepare men for a future and eternal state. For this purpose he hath given them their commission to preach the gospel. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." This general commission is explained by Christ's particular commission to Paul, which runs in this solemn form, "Rise, and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." This design of the ministry is confirmed by another passage in the fourth of Ephesians. "Wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists;

Digitized by Google

and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." These passages represent ministers as appointed for the great purpose of preparing man to appear in the beauties of holiness in a future state. And this design of their appointment, all faithful ministers sincerely wish to answer. They desire to fall in with the designs of Christ, and to be workers together with him, in accomplishing the purposes of his grace. So Paul professes in the name of all his faithful brethren in the ministry: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." As every faithful ambassador means to obey the will of his prince, and attain the object of his appointment, so every faithful minister means to obey the command of Christ, and seek the salvation of his hearers.

Secondly: The end which faithful ministers propose to themselves, in entering into the ministry, is, to promote the salvation of souls. They undertake to preach the gospel, not of constraint, but willingly; not to gain wealth, or applause, but to gain the souls of men. They have seen their own hearts, and their perishing state by nature. They have felt their own need of a Saviour, and found the hope and relief which the gospel affords to believing, penitent, broken-hearted sinners. They know by their own experience, the perishing state of sinners, and the infinite importance of the gospel. They feel a tenderness and compassion for their fellow men. They wish to be instrumental in turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. And it is this sincere love to souls, which induces them to undertake the great and difficult work of preaching the gospel.

Now, the end which any one proposes in any employment, he naturally desires to accomplish. The faithful attorney, who undertakes his calling to maintain justice between man and man, always pursues this object, in all his pleas and exertions. And the faithful physician, who practises the healing art, to cure the disorders and preserve the lives of his fellow men, always seeks the life and health of his patients. So a faithful

Digitized by Google

minister, who enters upon his work from the pure motives of benevolence and compassion, will always aim, in all his preaching, to save the souls of his hearers. As soon as Paul was converted he wished to convert others. And, therefore, as soon as he was called to preach, he instantly obeyed the call. "But when it pleased God," says he, "who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." It was love to souls which induced Paul to preach, and this love constrained him to seek the salvation of his hearers. And all, who enter into the ministry from the same motive, uniformly pursue the same end. They carry about with them, and especially into the pulpit, a sincere and ardent desire to save the souls of men. Like Paul, they travail in birth for souls; and like him, their heart's desire and prayer to God is, that sinners, through their preaching, may be saved.

Thirdly: Faithful ministers desire to fulfil the weighty obligations which are laid upon them, when the souls of men are committed to their care and instruction. Then they are charged to take heed unto themselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers, to "feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Yea, they are charged before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and kingdom, to preach the word; to be instant in season and out of season; to reprove, to rebuke, and exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. Under the impression of these obligations, they maintain an habitual sense that they watch for souls as those who must give account. And this creates in them an ardent desire to fulfil the ministry which they have received of the Lord Jesus, and to promote the salvation of those whom he hath committed to their trust, and for whom he hath suffered and died.

Fourthly: Faithful ministers place their own happiness in the salvation of their people. They often look forward, and anticipate the joy of meeting those whom they may be instrumental of saving, at the right hand of Christ. And they can hardly form an idea of a greater satisfaction than this. Paul frequently mentions the pleasure which he anticipated in seeing the



Digitized by Google

fruit of his labors in the salvation of souls. He says to the Corinthians, "As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus." Again he exhorts the Philippians to live a holy and exemplary life, giving this as the reason, "that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain." In another place he calls them his "joy and crown." And "what," says he, to the Thessalonians, "is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" Thus Paul placed his own happiness in the salvation of his hearers; which enabled him to say with sincerity to the Jew, that he desired to gain the Jew; to the Gentile, that he desired to gain the Gentile; to the weak, that he desired to gain the weak; and to the Corinthians, that he sought not theirs, but them. He considered every person whom he was instrumental of converting, as a part of his future and eternal reward, and therefore most sincerely desired, in his preaching, to save the souls of men. As God had expressly given him those who once sailed with him, so he expected that he would give him all whom he should ever be instrumental of turning from darkness to light. And all faithful ministers have the same glorious recompense of reward set before them, to stimulate their desires and endeavors to promote the salvation of their hearers. The more they turn to righteousness, the brighter will they shine, and the more completely happy they will be, in the kingdom of glory. Their happiness will be eternally augmented, by the salvation of their people. This powerful motive is peculiar to faithful ministers, and inspires them with peculiar zeal to win souls. I may add,

Fifthly: Faithful ministers desire to convert and save sinners, for the honor of Christ. They consider themselves as his servants, whose business it is to promote his glory, in the salvation of souls. So Paul represents himself and his brethren in the ministry: "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." There is no other way in which ministers can serve and glorify Christ so much, as by promoting the salvation of sinners, and increasing the number of his cordial subjects. Every convert is translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of Christ.

Digitized by Google

Believers are called the glory of Christ; and in seeing them, he is said to see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. They were the joy set before him, in the view of which he despised the shame, and endured the pains of the cross. Believers, who have been redeemed by his blood, and converted by his gospel, shall be presented before him, in all the beauties of holiness, "when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." When all the vessels of mercy shall be collected, and seated at the right hand of Christ, they will reflect peculiar honor and glory upon him; and shine to the praise of the glory of his grace, in the eyes of all the intelligent creation. This faithful ministers desire to see and enjoy; and therefore when they preach, they desire to win souls to Christ, that he may receive the reward of his sufferings, and enjoy the travail of his soul, in the holiness, happiness and praises of those who were given unto him before the foundation of the world. These are some of the plain and solid reasons, why faithful ministers desire to promote the salvation of their hearers. It now remains only to improve and apply the subject, agreeably to the present serious and important occasion.

1. If faithful ministers have a desire to promote the salvation of souls, then this desire must have great influence upon all parts of their ministerial conduct. To desire the salvation of souls is to desire their future and eternal good. This great and extensive desire, therefore, must naturally lead the minds of ministers to view their people in the light of eternity. And this view of their people must necessarily raise them all to a level. I do not say sink them to a level, but raise them to a level; because it always raises men, even the smallest and lowest men, to view them in relation to eternity. In this view, all souls are equal. The soul of the child is equal to the soul of the parent; the soul of the subject is equal to the soul of the ruler; the soul of the servant is equal to the soul of the master; and the soul of the poor is equal to the soul of the rich. Eternity levels all distinctions, and raises all immortal souls into infinite importance. One soul, in the view of eternity, appears of more worth than the whole world. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" While a minister has such a view of the equal worth of every soul, he

Digitized by Google

will neither aim to flatter the rich, nor please the learned; but endeavor to preach with that plainness and impartiality which is directly calculated to promote the salvation of every one of his hearers.

Again: This desire to save souls will excite a minister to great diligence and activity in his sacred office. When any one object absorbs the attention and affections of the mind, it always makes a man zealous. So when the salvation of his hearers absorbs the affections and attention of a minister, it never fails to fire him with zeal in their service, and constrains him to sacrifice his own ease, reputation and interest, for their eternal good. He feels that there is nothing of his too great to be given up, for the salvation of his people. Paul's desire to save souls inspired him with astonishing zeal and self-denial. To attain this desirable and invaluable object, he spared no pains, he feared no reproaches, and he shunned no dangers, nor persecutions. He was always ready to spend and be spent in preaching the gospel, and promoting the salvation of sinners. "Yea," says he to the Philippians, "if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all." And every minister who feels this benevolent and compassionate desire for the salvation of souls, will cheerfully employ his time, exhaust his strength, and wear out his life, in the service of his people.

Besides: This desire will constrain him to preach in the most profitable manner. It will make him speak like a dying and accountable creature, to dying and accountable creatures. Knowing the terrors of the Lord, and realizing the scenes of eternity, he will deliver his discourses with such a tenderness and solemnity, as can scarcely fail of persuading his hearers to secure their eternal interest. It will direct him to use a plain and familiar style, and to construct his discourses so as to enlighten and convince, rather than so as to soothe and please his people. He will speak, not as pleasing men, but God, who trieth his heart. He will preach such doctrines, and only such, as he verily believes will appear to be true at the last day. And these he will preach without the least ambiguity or disguise. He will mean to preach the whole counsel of God, and to keep back nothing which he conceives would be profitable to his people. And he will plainly and faithfully warn his hearers against

Digitized by Google

every thing which he apprehends will appear to be an error, a delusion, or a moral evil, at the day of judgment. In a word, a desire to save souls, will make him constantly solicitous to live and preach in such a manner as to become a sweet savor to God, in them that are saved and in them that perish.

2. If faithful ministers desire the salvation of souls, then their work is extremely great and arduous. It is a work which creates constant care and concern, and fills their minds with great anxiety and distress. They carry all their people upon their hearts, and feel interested in every thing which affects their temporal and eternal interest. Their cares are as numerous and as weighty as the souls committed to their trust. If any of their people are careless and secure; if any neglect public worship or family prayer; if any run into dangerous errors and delusions; if any fall into animosities and contentions; or if any practise infamous and destructive vices; it wounds and grieves their hearts. For all such things among their people threaten to destroy their souls, which they most earnestly desire to prevent. Paul often tells his hearers how much he carried them upon his heart. To the Philippians he says, "God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ." He tells the Thessalonians, "We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail." How tender is his appeal to the Corinthians! "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is offended, and I burn not?" And to the same persons he expresses his paternal care and concern. "Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you; for I seek not yours but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." This was a truly paternal affection. Parents never lose their love nor care for their children, though ever so ungrateful and disobedient. So faithful ministers never cease to care for their people, but feel their anxiety and concern increase, as any of them appear to wax worse and worse. Like their blessed Master, they are

Digitized by Google

grieved for the hardness of men's hearts; and like his faithful apostle, they warn every one night and day with tears. Cares are the heaviest burdens in life. And these fall with heavier weight upon pious ministers, than upon any other men in the world.

3. If faithful ministers desire to promote the salvation of souls, then they stand in great need of the prayers of the people of God. They desire and pursue an object which it is out of their power to attain. They may plant and water, but they cannot give the increase. They may pray and preach with the most earnest desire for the good of souls, but it is beyond their reach to convert a sinner from the error of his way, or to save a soul from death. They may labor in vain, and spend their strength for nought, unless God opens the hearts of their people to embrace the truth. This they most sensibly feel, and, therefore, most earnestly desire the prayers of saints, that they may be enabled to preach both faithfully and successfully. Paul solicited the prayers of the godly, with great importunity. "Brethren, pray for us." "Brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified." Again, "Pray for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." Those ministers who preach with the desire to save the souls of men, always preach those truths which are disagreeable to the human heart, and which naturally excite the enmity and opposition of sinners. Such preachers, therefore, more especially need the prayers of their pious people, and more earnestly desire them. They feel that he that planteth, and he that watereth, are nothing; and therefore they look to God, and desire others to look to God, to give the increase.

4. If faithful ministers desire to promote the salvation of souls, then they are worthy of peculiar respect. They are sincere friends to mankind. They are heartily concerned and engaged to promote the highest good of their fellow-creatures. And such men, if any in the world, deserve respect and esteem. Does the defender of our rights, the protector of our property, or the preserver of our lives, command our esteem and respect? and shall not the friend of our souls be an object of our veneration and respect? No men really merit the affectionate esteem

Digitized by Google

of the world, more than those who faithfully, laboriously and anxiously watch for their souls. Hence, says the apostle to the Thessalonians, "We beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." Could the people look into the hearts of their faithful ministers, and see their heavy cares and their longing desires for the salvation of their souls, they would be constrained to revere, esteem and respect them.

5. If faithful ministers sincerely desire, and labor to promote the salvation of their people; then their people are bound in gratitude as well as equity to give them a comfortable support. If they are willing to spend and be spent for the spiritual and eternal good of their people, then their desires and labors merit an ample reward; nor can their people have the least reason to desire to withhold it. They ought to feel a pleasure in supporting those who are seeking their best interest both in time and eternity. Paul was no hireling. He solemnly declares that he "coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel." But yet he strenuously insists upon the indispensable duty of men, to support their ministers. I will read a passage of his, which ought to be written, as with the point of a diamond, upon every hearer's heart. "Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, 'Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.' Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written; that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple, and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

Digitized by Google

6. If faithful ministers sincerely desire to promote the salvation of souls; then it is extremely criminal for any to despise and oppose them in their great and good design. Mankind have always shown a strange propensity to despise and oppose the ambassadors of God. And never was there a time, perhaps, when this malignant disposition was more visible in this land than at the present day. A loose and infidel spirit prevails more or less everywhere, and especially appears in opposition to faithful ministers. Those who are enemies to God, to the Bible, to religion, and to all righteousness, point their virulence at the clergy; and seem determined to obstruct and defeat all their exertions to defend the gospel, and promote religion. But how extremely base and ungrateful is their conduct! Our Lord saith to his ministers, "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me." Paul had occasion to paint the malignity and opposition of infidels in the blackest colors. And his description will suit all who are, at this day, opposing the pious exertions of ministers, and the saving effects of the gospel. Paul and Barnabas having preached to Sergius Paulus, Elymas the sorcerer withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. "Then Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes upon him, and said, O full of all subtlety, and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" Such is the base, the ungrateful, the diabolical disposition, that prompts men to oppose a benevolent gospel, and a pious ministry. Can any thing be more criminal in the sight of God, or call louder for the severe and swift execution of his wrath? And who ever hardened themselves against God, and prospered? Now, therefore, be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong.

7. If faithful ministers desire the salvation of souls; then those who are destitute of this desire, are really unfaithful in the sight of God, and unqualified for their sacred office. A sincere desire to save the souls of men, stamps the character of a faithful minister; and neither genius, nor learning, nor eloquence, nor the greatest pulpit talents, can supply the want of this desire. Let us, then, my brethren, examine the feelings of our hearts, and the real motives of our conduct, in preaching

Digitized by Google

the gospel. Have we sincerely desired to promote the salvation of our people? Have we carried them upon our hearts? Have we experienced the pleasures and the pains of faithful ministers? Have we rejoiced in the appearance of the awakening, conviction, and conversion of sinners? Have we rejoiced in the apparent prosperity of Christ's kingdom? And, on the other hand, have we been in heaviness and sorrow, for the secure, the thoughtless, the impenitent, and hardened, among our people? Can each of us say to his flock, as Paul said to his hearers, "I seek not yours but you?" If we can sincerely say this, we have the witness in ourselves that we are faithful.

8. If faithful ministers sincerely desire to promote the salvation of souls; then they are more likely to be successful in their work than others. Their desires, their prayers, and their exertions, must be pleasing to God, and have a moral tendency to draw down a blessing upon their labors. A very pious and successful minister of the last century said that, so far as his observation extended, not the most learned, most eloquent, or most studious ministers, were the most successful; but those who were the most desirous of success. It is said of Barnabas, that he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith; and much people was added to the Lord. Pious ministers, who are full of love, faith and zeal in the cause of Christ, have peculiar reason to hope that God will give them the desire of their hearts, in the salvation of their people. But though this desire should not be granted them, they may rest satisfied that their desires and exertions shall not be lost, but shall secure the approbation of God, in the day when they must give an account of their stewardship. This is a sufficient encouragement to persevere in well doing, for in due season they shall reap if they faint not. Under the impression of this thought, I would now turn my discourse to him who is about to devote himself to the service of souls.

Dear Sir, — Behold the people now to be committed to your trust. Do you feel compassion for their precious souls? Is your spirit stirred within you, as Paul's was when he saw the Athenians in their perishing condition? Is it your heart's desire to be made the humble and happy instrument of turning sinners to God, and of building up saints in their most holy faith? If this be your leading motive in taking the charge of



Digitized by Google

this people, your undertaking is promising. This desire will have a happy influence upon all your ministerial labors. It will make you industrious in your studies, faithful in your preaching, and exemplary in all your private conduct and conversation. It will bring all your secular and personal concerns into subordination to the spiritual and eternal concerns of your people. It will save you from that undue attachment to the world and the things of the world, which is so injurious to the feelings, the character, and usefulness of ministers. It will conciliate the esteem and affections of your people, and give you a peculiar boldness and freedom in addressing them, both in public and private, upon the weighty concerns of the soul. In a word, it will prepare you to live and to die with your people; and to meet them with comfort, at the last day, whether they are saved, or whether they are lost. Be entreated, then, to examine the motives of your conduct, on the day of your consecration to your sacred office. Live under an habitual impression that you watch for souls as one who must give account. Let it be your constant desire and endeavor, from this day to the day of your death, to save both yourself and them that hear you. Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, and your labor shall not be in vain in the Lord.

One word to the church and people in this place, will conclude my discourse.

Brethren and Friends, — This is a serious and important day to you, as well as to him who is about to take the care of your souls. He must give an account how he feels and conducts towards you, and you must give account how you feel and conduct towards him. It is his interest to seek your good; and your interest to seek his usefulness. Your salvation is the great object to which his desires and your desires, his exertions and your exertions, ought to be directed. Be entreated, then, to assist and encourage your pastor in his great and good work. You may assist him by your prayers, and encourage him by a constant and sincere attendance on his public instructions. But if you neglect your duty as a people, while he fulfils his duty as a minister, all his prayers, and desires, and exertions, will aggravate your guilt, and ripen you for ruin. Receive the word, therefore, into good and honest hearts, that you may bring forth fruit to the glory of God, to the joy of your pastor, and to the present and future peace of your own souls. Amen.

Digitized by Google

# SERMON IX.

## MINISTERS EXPOSED TO CORRUPTION BY THEIR PEOPLE.

PREACHED AT THE ORDINATION OF MR. JOHN SMITH, AT SALEM, N. H., JANUARY 4, 1797.

---

**But thou son of man, hear what I say unto thee: Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house.—Ezekiel 2: 8.**

THE children of Israel were once holiness to the Lord, and the first fruits of their increase. They served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua. But ever after that memorable period, they began to lose the spirit of religion, and became more and more corrupt, until they were carried into captivity, as a just punishment for their deep declension. In this deplorable situation, they continued to harden themselves in sin, and to pine away in their iniquities, until every appearance of spiritual life was gone. Then God was pleased to send Ezekiel to prophesy over the valley of dry bones, in order to raise them from spiritual death to spiritual life. And to prepare him for his arduous task, he forewarned him of his danger, and charged him to guard against it. "Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel. —Be not afraid of them,—though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions; be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; for they are most rebellious. But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee: Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house."



Digitized by Google

This was the same as to say, "I know the degeneracy of the times. I know the corruption and obstinacy of the people. I know they will stop their ears and harden their hearts against divine truth. And I know that for this purpose, they will use every method, by words and looks, to corrupt your heart, poison your sentiments, and destroy your influence. But I warn you to beware of men; and never suffer yourself to be corrupted by those whom you are sent to reprove and reform." This divine caution applies to all who are called to bear the messages of God to men, and naturally leads us, on this occasion, to show,

I. That ministers are exposed to be corrupted by the people; and,

II. That it is their indispensable duty to guard against it.

I. Let us consider that ministers are exposed to be corrupted by the people.

Though this be a very humiliating truth to ministers as well as people, yet let us attend to the evidence of it with seriousness and impartiality. And here I would observe,

1. That ministers have been corrupted by the people. This was the unhappy case of Aaron. While Moses was detained on the mount, the people were uneasy, and came to Aaron, and desired him to make them an idol. Though he knew that he had no right to comply with this unreasonable request, yet he finally yielded to the importunity of the people, and made them a golden god. Accordingly, when Moses returned and reproved him for his conduct, he made no other excuse than the pressing importunity of the people. "And Moses said unto Aaron, what did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them?" This very question carries an implication that Aaron was corrupted. "And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief. For they said unto me, Make us gods which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." This was a base insinuation to the dishonor of Moses, and an artful address to the vanity of Aaron; which was exactly suited to corrupt his heart, and draw him from the path of duty. The event answered the desire and expectation of those who were set on mischief; for Aaron was corrupted and became "rebellious like that rebellious house." The same thing happened to the

Digitized by Google

sons and successors of Aaron; for we find that they were always corrupt, when the people were corrupt. There was a great degeneracy in the time of the judges, when every man did what was right in his own eyes; and that day of declension proved a day of temptation to the priests, who were carried away by the stream of corruption. When Asa came to the throne, we are told that for a long season Israel had been without the true God, and without a teaching priest. A great number of the priests were actually put down, in the reign of Josiah, because they had fallen into the degeneracy of the times. And at the reformation in Hezekiah's day, there was such a scarcity of uncorrupted priests, that the Levites were called in to assist them in the discharge of their office. Indeed, it was so common for the priests to be involved in the corruptions of the people, that God generally reproved them both together. By Jeremiah he says, "A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so." By the same prophet he says again, that he would remove Jerusalem from before his face, "because of all the evil of the children of Israel and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, and their priests." By Ezekiel he says of Judea, "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things; they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean." By Micah he says of the house of Israel, "The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money." By Zephaniah he says of the oppressing city, "She obeyed not the voice; she received not correction; she trusted not in the Lord; she drew not near to her God. Her princes within her are roaring lions; her judges are ravening wolves. Her prophets are light and treacherous persons; her priests have polluted the sanctuary, they have done violence to the law."

Now if the priests were always corrupt, when the people were corrupt, then it is natural to conclude that they were, in some measure at least, corrupted by the people. But we are not left to mere conjecture in this case; for God himself complains of the people for being always disposed to corrupt their teachers.



Digitized by Google

"I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and led you forty years through the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite. And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith the Lord. But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink, and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophesy not." They meant to corrupt the friends of virtue, and the ministers of religion, on purpose to destroy the influence of their example, and the force of their instructions and admonitions; and they very rarely failed of accomplishing their malignant purpose. The experience of ages, therefore, loudly proclaims that ministers are exposed to be drawn from their duty, and involved in moral corruption, by the undue influence of the people.

2. The bare example of the people, in a day of declension, has a natural tendency to corrupt ministers. Moral corruption is contagious, and endangers all who are obliged to come within the sphere of its influence. When the people become cold and dull, and averse to every thing of a religious nature, ministers are apt to imbibe and manifest the same spirit. When the people become light and vain in their conversation, ministers are apt to countenance and imitate their levity. When the people grow rich, and gay, and luxurious, ministers are apt to fall into the same loose and corrupt habits. When the people indulge themselves in idleness, dissipation and vain amusements, ministers are apt to be allured into their company and become patrons and partakers of their sins. And when the people become loose in their sentiments and will not endure sound doctrine, ministers are apt to conceal or pervert the great truths of the gospel, and preach smooth things, to secure the applause and friendship of the enemies of truth. The day of degeneracy is a day of danger to ministers. The prevailing spirit and practice of the times naturally tend to cool their zeal, weaken their virtue, and injure both the matter and manner of their preaching. But, though they are exposed to be corrupted by the bare example of the people, yet,

3. They are in much greater danger of being corrupted, by the positive endeavors and exertions of the people to draw them into sin. A corrupt people feel themselves obliged to take this course, in order to resist the energy of plain and faithful preaching. They know the power of divine truth, the force of pious

Digitized by Google

example, and the influence of godly ministers; and they feel unable to stand before these united means of conviction. To prevent, therefore, the pains of a wounded conscience, they endeavor, by various methods, to bring ministers over to their own side, and form them agreeably to their own taste. Some treat them with peculiar respect, and flatter their vanity, to make them more yielding and compliant. Some load them with kindness, and endeavor to draw them aside by the powerful cords of interest. Some invite them to their houses, and into their company and urge them to small, and seemingly harmless compliances, and so take advantage of their weakness. And some use more harsh and imperious methods, and attempt to frighten them from their virtue and integrity.

Such methods as these, we find the children of Israel often employed, to corrupt those who were sent to them as messengers of the Lord of hosts. Sometimes they attacked their virtue and innocence, "by giving them wine to drink." Sometimes "they said to the seers, see not; and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: Get ye out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." Sometimes they threatened their prophets with the terror of their tongues. "Come," said they, "let us devise devices against Jeremiah,—and let us smite him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words." Sometimes they employed their frowning looks as well as hard words, to deter their teachers from their duty, and make them rebellious like themselves. And sometimes "they commanded their prophets, saying, prophesy not." This rough method Amaziah used, to silence the prophet Amos. "Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there; but prophesy not again any more at Bethel; for it is the king's chapel, and it is the king's court." And the council at Jerusalem laid the same imperious prohibition upon the apostles. After mature deliberation, "they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus." Jews and Gentiles are the same by nature, and therefore our Lord taught his ministers to expect the same treatment from the Gentiles, which the prophets had received from the Jews. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile

Digitized by Google

you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake; — for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." The conduct of both Jews and Gentiles towards the ministers of religion, is a demonstration of the natural disposition of mankind, to use every method in their power to corrupt the hearts and destroy the influence of those who are sent to instruct and reclaim them. We are all by this time convinced, I presume, that ministers are exposed to be corrupted by the people. But if they are exposed to this danger, then,

II. It is their indispensable duty to guard against it. "Son of man, hear what I say unto thee: Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house."

It is the dictate of common sense, that every man ought to avoid every danger which he knows, and which he is able to avoid. Ministers know the danger of being corrupted, and they are all able to guard against it. This appears from the conduct of many who have gone before them, in delivering the messages of God to men. The faithful prophets and priests, as well as pious apostles, felt their exposedness to the frowns and flatteries of the world; but they nobly resisted every effort to allure, or to awe them from their duty. The prophet Samuel, who was early called to deliver the messages of God to Israel, faithfully discharged his office, and maintained his innocence and integrity to the last. Though he lived in a day of declension, and the people were weary of the divine government, yet he would never yield to their corrupt inclinations any further than God allowed him to gratify their wishes; so that he was able, just before his death, to make the most solemn appeal to their consciences, that he had walked uprightly before them all the days of his life. Elijah singly and nobly resisted the frowns of the people, the reproach of the prophets, and the wrath of the king. Jeremiah was surrounded by enemies who threatened to defame his character, and to destroy his life, unless he would forbear to reprove them for their sins, and admonish them of their danger; but he bravely despised their threats, and faithfully discharged his duty, and the primitive preachers of the gospel displayed no less magnanimity and firmness, in the course of their ministry. When Peter and John were commanded not to preach in the name of Jesus, by the

Digitized by Google

most dignified characters in the Jewish nation, they boldly replied, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken nuto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." But Paul met with the most opposition, and accordingly manifested the most Christian fortitude and fidelity in preaching the gospel. "Do I," says he to the Galatians, "do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." He assures the Thessalonians that he had made it his maxim as a minister, to please God rather than men. "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts." The conduct of these faithful servants of God, gives us clear and striking evidence that ministers are able, and therefore ought, to guard against all the peculiar dangers of their office. And to impress this plain and practical duty the more deeply on our minds, I would observe,

1. That God has expressly commanded ministers to guard against the attempts of those who would corrupt their hearts, and draw them aside from the path of duty. His command to Ezekiel on this subject is extremely pointed and solemn: "Son of man I send thee to the children of Israel.—Be not afraid of them,—though briars and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions; be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; for they are most rebellious. But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious, like that rebellious house." Very similar to this, is the command which Christ gave to his apostles, and to all their successors in the ministry. "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." "Beware of men." These commands from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, bind all the ministers of the gospel to guard against the peculiar dangers of their sacred office, and to repel every temptation to unfaithfulness. It is their indispensable duty, therefore, to view mankind in the light in which the great Searcher of hearts has represented them; and to be as careful to avoid their corrupting influence, as they would be to avoid the jaws of a wolf, or the poison of a scorpion.

Digitized by Google

2. They will forfeit the divine presence and protection, if they suffer themselves to be corrupted; and therefore it is their indispensable duty to guard against it. While they continue faithful to God, and plainly deliver his messages to men, he has graciously promised to be with them, and to preserve them from the power of their enemies. Upon this condition, he promised to strengthen and support his prophet Ezekiel. "Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them." "Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant, harder than flint, have I made thy forehead; fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house." The same promise of support he gave to Jeremiah, on the same condition. "Be not afraid of their faces; for I am with thee, to deliver thee, saith the Lord." "Behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee." Christ also graciously promises to be with his ministers, so long as they strictly adhere to his precepts and appointments. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway." These gracious promises are all conditional, and are so explained by God himself. He says to Jeremiah, "Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee; be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them." And this awful threatening, God tells the corrupt priests in the days of Malachi, he had actually executed upon them. "Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as ye have not kept my ways, but have been partial in the law." Now, ministers have great reason to desire the divine presence and protection; for if God be with them, who can be against them? And they have as much reason to fear his departure and displeasure; for if God be against them, who can be for them? This serious and weighty consideration ought to make them ex-

Digitized by Google

tremely careful to regard God more than men, and never incur his displeasure, in order to gain the favor, or to avoid the frowns, of their fellow worms.

3. If ministers suffer themselves to be corrupted by the people, it destroys their usefulness. If they imbibe the spirit of the people, and feel as they feel; if they follow the example of the people, and conduct as they conduct; or if they condescend to preach smooth things to please the people; they will totally destroy their ministerial usefulness. For, as soon as the people perceive that they regard them more than God, and will prostitute their consciences to gratify their unreasonable desires, they will despise their persons and neglect their preaching. Time-serving ministers generally have but few hearers. All men, whether good or bad, inwardly despise loose and unprincipled ministers, let their talents be what they may. And the same degree of criminality, which would be scarcely observable in other men, is sufficient to destroy the character and usefulness of those who sustain the sacred office of the ministry. No men are so completely useless and contemptible, as those ministers who have lost all appearance of religion, and become visibly conformed to the spirit and manners of the world. For, as our Saviour says, they "are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." Hence the dignity of their character and the importance of their office, lay ministers of the gospel under solemn obligations to keep themselves unspotted from the world, and to preach the preaching which God bids them, whether their people will hear, or whether they will forbear.

I must observe once more,

4. If ministers suffer themselves to be carried down the stream of corruption, they become not only useless, but destructive to the people. Corrupt ministers are always corrupters. The whole tendency of their practice and preaching is, to corrupt and destroy the souls of their people. Though they have lost the power of doing good, yet they retain the power of doing evil. They can do more than other men, to pull down the kingdom of Christ, and build up the kingdom of Satan. And as they are more capable, so they are more disposed, than other men, to stifle the spirit of religion, oppose the doctrines of the

Digitized by Google

gospel, and strengthen the hearts and hands of the wicked. This is the character which God gives of the corrupt teachers in Israel. He says, "Shemaiah taught rebellion against the Lord." He says, the prophets of Samaria and Jerusalem made Israel to err, strengthened the hands of evil doers, and caused profaneness to go forth into all the land. When the people have formed their ministers after their own hearts, and made them rebellious like themselves, their ministers will then fit them fast for destruction. So God declares to Israel, by his faithful prophet Hosea: "There shall be like people, like priest, and I wlil punish them for their ways." And our Lord says, "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Thus ministers will destroy both their own souls and the souls of their people, if they suffer themselves to be corrupted by them. And can there be a more solemn and awful consideration than this, to constrain them to abstain from all appearance of evil, to guard against all the dangers of their office, and to discharge all the important duties of it with fidelity and zeal? This is our indispensable and infinitely important duty.

Having illustrated the danger and duty of ministers, I now proceed to a few reflections, which naturally grow out of the subject.

1. It is now a very dangerous day to ministers, in this young and flourishing republic. The people have fallen into a great and general declension. As they have increased, so they have sinned. They have lost their original piety and virtue, and become extremely loose both in practice and in principle. Every species of moral corruption has spread through every part of our nation, and seized all ranks and classes of men. Arminianism, Universalism and Deism, have more or less infected all our towns and parishes, and led multitudes to renounce those doctrines and duties of religion in which they were early educated by their pious parents and faithful ministers. This day of declension among the people, is a day of great danger to the preachers of the gospel. While iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxes cold, even the most faithful ministers of the gospel are in danger of falling into the degeneracy of the times. This is very evident from what has been said, and still more evident from the conduct of those who sustain the sacred character. Many ministers have already begun to degenerate with a

Digitized by Google

degenerate people. Some have lost that spirit of devotion, that strictness of life, and that purity of sentiment, which was once so conspicuous in the preachers of the gospel. And some have begun to yield to the corrupt humors and unreasonable desires of the people, in points of serious and weighty importance. Some yield to the vicious, and neglect to condemn and reprove their fashionable vices. Some yield to the heterodox, and neglect to condemn and expose their corrupt sentiments. Some yield to moral sinners, and neglect to preach those doctrines of the gospel which are so disagreeable to their carnal hearts. And some condescend even to dispense with the laws of Christ, and admit those to enjoy the ordinances of the gospel, who are visibly destitute of the scriptural qualifications. These are striking instances of ministers' yielding to the corruptions of the times, contrary to the dictates of their minds. And such instances as these are very numerous, and to be found all over the land. How many ministers neither preach nor practise according to their own sentiments, through fear of offending, and through desire of pleasing the people? This conduct weakens the hands of faithful ministers, and strengthens the hands of those who wish to corrupt them. The present prospect is, that those who are the light of the world will lose their lustre, and those who are the salt of the earth will lose their savor, and there will be like people, like priest. Trying times for ministers are probably coming. And let us all, who think we stand, take heed lest we fall.

2. Ministers need, at this day, to be well qualified for their office. Though religion has decayed, yet knowledge has increased. There are men of letters, or at least men of information, in every religious society. The people in general are much more capable now, than they were formerly, of judging of the talents and qualifications of ministers. And as they are more critical in discerning, so they are more severe in censuring, every ministerial defect or imperfection. The corruption of the times appears in nothing more visibly, than in the united opposition of the people to sacred things, and to sacred persons. They seem determined to bring down ministers, and make reprisals upon them, for their having so long possessed the public esteem and confidence. Those, therefore, who enter into the ministry at such a day as this, need to be well qualified for their



Digitized by Google

great and arduous work. If they assume the sacred office, without any consistent scheme of religious sentiments, or any considerable stock of theological knowledge, they will very probably injure the cause which they ought to defend and promote. For people have lost their former implicit faith in the opinions of ministers, and pay no respect to their bare assertions. They demand evidence for every thing which their teachers call upon them to believe and practise. And this renders it necessary for ministers to be mighty in the Scriptures, and expert in reasoning upon divine subjects. They ought to be able to meet Deists, Universalists, and all gainsayers, upon their own ground, and expose the fallacy and weakness of their boasted arguments. There is reason to believe that the late rapid increase of error and infidelity in this land, is partly owing to the ignorance of ministers, who have never formed any clear and consistent scheme of divinity in their own minds. They have suffered error and infidelity to take root in their own congregations, through a sense of their own insufficiency to maintain and defend the truth. And this has led infidels and others, to represent the clergy as a weak, ignorant, superstitious set of men. Hence it highly concerns the ministers of the gospel, at this day, to wipe off such aspersions from their order, by possessing and displaying that knowledge which may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. It is presumption for any man to undertake to preach the gospel, without being able to prove the inspiration of the Scriptures, and to defend the important doctrines which the Bible contains. This is what the people now justly expect; and if they are disappointed, it will injure both them and those who profess to be their religious instructors.

But prudence, as well as knowledge, is a necessary qualification for a minister. He needs this to enable him to exhibit divine truth in the most profitable manner, and to escape those snares which the enemies of truth will always endeavor to lay for him. Our Lord was a prudent preacher. His prudence, however, did not consist in taking the safest methods to conceal disagreeable doctrines, but in delivering disagreeable doctrines at a proper time, and in proper expressions. How often did his enemies attempt to entangle him in his talk! And how often did he confound and silence them! There are many at this day who feel the same opposition to the ministers of the gospel

Digitized by Google

that the Jews felt towards Christ; and therefore they need to be wise and prudent, as he was, in order to avoid the same snares and dangers which he by his prudence avoided. Accordingly he has expressly enjoined it upon them, to "be wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

But ministers of the gospel, at this day of declension, need large measures of grace, as well as of knowledge and prudence. They need to be crucified to the world, and the world to them, by the cross of Christ. They ought to be willing to take up their cross daily, and endure the afflictions of the gospel. They ought to seek the honor which cometh from God, and renounce that which cometh from men. They ought to savor of the things which be of God, and not those which be of men. They ought to love God, and Christ, and the souls of men so much, as to be willing to be poor and despised and abused by men, in the faithful discharge of their duty. They ought, in a word to be so holy, and harmless, and pure, and heavenly-minded, as to be proof against all the frowns and flatteries of those who wish to weaken their hands, discourage their hearts, and destroy their influence. If those who enter upon the ministry are possessed of these superior qualifications, they may hope, through the divine goodness, to war a good warfare, to keep the faith, and endure unto the end; so as to receive that crown of righteousness which is reserved for those who are faithful unto death. But if any presume to run before they are sent, and to preach before they are qualified, they have reason to expect that they shall one day fall into the corruption of the times, and become a reproach to the sacred order, and a stumbling to those whom they ought to have reproved and reclaimed.

3. It is the duty of all good men, at this day especially, to aid and assist the ministers of the gospel in the discharge of their office. No men have greater difficulties to encounter than ministers, and therefore no men stand in more need of assistance than they. They are pleading the cause of all good men, against the united opposition of all bad men. Good men, therefore, ought to do all in their power to countenance and assist them. And in compassion to ministers, God has been pleased to lay his special commands upon all good men to help them. The duties which good men owe to ministers are plainly pointed out, and strongly enjoined in the word of

Digitized by Google

God. I will read a number of plain passages to this purpose. "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account." "We beseech you, brethren, to know them that labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." "Brethren, pray for us." "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe." "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified,—and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men." These precepts require good men, in particular, to hear their ministers, to revere their ministers, to esteem their ministers, and to pray for their ministers. It is high time for all real Christians to awake from their stupor, and by their prayers and exertions, to aid the ministers of the gospel in their difficult and important work. If Christian professors would unite with Christian ministers, in the common cause of Christianity, we might reasonably hope that religion would gain ground, and vice and infidelity would everywhere fall before it.

But it is time to conclude the discourse, with such addresses as are usual on such an occasion as this. And, in the first place, I turn to him, who is about to take the pastoral care of this people.

Dear Sir,—You are entering upon a work of great difficulty and danger. You will fare better than any who have gone before you in the ministry, if you should not meet with any who wish and endeavor to draw you from the path of duty. The people to whom you are going to minister, we presume, are as well disposed towards the gospel, and towards the preachers of it, as religious societies in general. But the corruptions of the times have reached this as well as other places. You are, therefore, entering upon the work of the ministry at a very

Digitized by Google

dangerous period. And though we hope you are really friendly to God and to his cause, yet the seeds of rebellion are not entirely destroyed in your own heart. There is something still within you, which exposes you to be moved from your steadfastness. Moral corruption spreads its poison very insensibly, and often gains the possession of the heart before the man is aware. You cannot, therefore, be too watchful against its pernicious influence. To defeat the designs of those who may wish to weaken your hands and heart in the cause of God, you cannot take a more direct and effectual method, than to become "an ensample to the flock." It is the proper business of ministers to set, and not to follow example. Instead of suffering yourself to be formed to the spirit and manners of others, make it your constant aim and endeavor to form others to the spirit of the gospel and the life of religion. If your people perceive this to be your steady and governing principle of action, they will have but little hope, and of consequence but little courage, to make the attempt of corrupting either your heart, your life, or your preaching. If you appear to regard God more than man, and the good of your people more than their censure or applause, they will feel a power in your preaching, and force in your example, which they can neither gainsay nor resist; especially if you discover at the same time a readiness to please, and even to oblige them, in all things which are consistent with the duties of your office. Conscience is always on the side of the faithful minister, and against every rebellious child of Adam. And it is this which gives every minister, who speaks for God, and with his words, the ascendency over the most hardened and obstinate sinners. Only fear God, and make his word the standard of your preaching, and you need not fear to deliver the most disagreeable truths to your people, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear; for they will feel that there is a man of God among them.

A good soldier esteems it an honor to be called to the post of danger. And if you are a good soldier of Jesus Christ, you will esteem it an honor to plead his cause in a day of declension. It is a cause which will certainly prevail somewhere; and if you do your duty, you may humbly hope that it will prevail in this place. But, should you be so unhappy as to find religion decaying among your own people, and among those



Digitized by Google

around you, let it not damp your spirit, but awaken you to be more fervent in your devotions, more indefatigable in your studies, more zealous in your preaching, and more holy and exemplary in your living. The united exertions of the enemies of religion, ought to rouse the united exertions of those who are set for the defence of the gospel, to put a check upon the growing spirit of irreligion; and we hope you will not be wanting, in your desires and endeavors, to awaken stupid sinners to a sense of their danger and duty.

There can be no neuters in the cause of Christ. He that is not for him, must be against him; and he that gathereth not with him, must scatter abroad. You must be conformed either to Christ or to the world. You must either preach rebellion against God, or bear your public testimony against it, both in preaching and in practice. On this day of your solemn consecration to the sacred office, you are solemnly called upon to choose whom you will serve, whether Christ or his enemies. Be entreated to make a wise choice, and never depart from it, because the consequences will be infinitely important. So our Lord hath taught you, in the most striking language: "Who then," says he, "is a faithful and wise servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Son of man, hear what your Lord saith unto you, and be not thou rebellious, like such a rebellious servant; but be thou faithful unto death, and the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give you a crown of life which shall never fade away.

The church and congregation in this place, will now indulge me in a free and friendly address to them, on this solemn occasion.

Brethren and Friends, — Behold the man, whom you have so unanimously chosen to take the pastoral care of your souls.

Digitized by Google

Receive him as a messenger of the Lord of hosts, and seek the law at his mouth. Esteem him highly in love for his work's sake. Consider him as a minister as well as a man, and pay respect to the minister in the man. Cease not to pray for him, and to join with him in building up the Redeemer's kingdom. In this, and in this alone, you may reasonably desire him to be one with you; and in this, and in this alone, will he be willing to join with you, if he is a faithful servant of God. Never desire him to regard you more than God; and never become his enemies because he tells you the truth. This will be distressing to him, and destructive to yourselves. He cannot serve you any longer than he serves God. If you should be so unwise as to desire him to conform to your unreasonable wishes, and so successful as to bring him to a conformity, you will injure both him and yourselves. It appears from what has been said, however, that the people are extremely prone to corrupt their ministers; and this affords ground to fear, that this people, who have been so remarkably unanimous in the choice of him who is now to be set over them in the Lord, may nevertheless become disposed to weaken his hands and discourage his heart in the service of their souls. Should you endeavor to do this, and succeed in it, how dreadful will be your situation when you come to see, at the last day, that you have grieved the heart and destroyed the influence of one, who desired, and endeavored to promote, your eternal good! But, on the other hand, what can afford you greater joy, than to be presented before the universe, as friends to God, and to them who were workers together with him in building up his kingdom? You and your pastor are both in danger. He is in danger from you, and you are in danger from him. The connection which may be this day formed between you, will be infinitely interesting to you all. We beseech you, brethren and friends, to take heed how you hear your minister, how you feel towards him, and how you treat him. He can do but very little without you. He needs your love, your prayers, and your assistance. He is called, like young Samuel, to bear the messages of God to you, in a day of great declension. And if it be his heart's desire and prayer to God, that you may be saved, let it be your heart's desire and prayer to God, that he may be both faithful and successful. And if you receive a prophet in the name of a prophet, you shall receive a prophet's reward. Amen.

Digitized by Google

# SERMON X.

## PURPOSE OF REDEMPTION.

ORDINATION OF MR. JOSEPH EMERSON, TO THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE THIRD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN BEVERLY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1803.

---

**To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. — Ephesians 3: 10, 11.**

THE Jews were the seed of Abraham, to whom the promises of the Messiah were made; and from this circumstance they were led to imagine that salvation was confined to them in distinction from all other nations. This was their prevailing opinion, both before and after the crucifixion of Christ. Nor were the apostles themselves, at first, altogether divested of this national prejudice. But Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, was early favored with more enlightened and enlarged views of the gospel. He knew that it comprised the whole counsel of God; that it was intended for the benefit of all nations, and that it would, in its final operation, give the brightest display of the divine attributes to all intelligent beings. This sublime idea of the gospel inspired him with gratitude to Christ, for giving him the peculiar privilege of unfolding the great scheme of salvation to all men, whether Jews or Gentiles: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid



Digitized by Google

in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

These last words, in this connection, naturally lead us to inquire who are meant by the church; when God formed his purpose of redeeming the church; and why he formed this gracious design.

I. Let us consider who are meant by the church.

Paul sometimes uses this appellation to denote a single society of Christians; but he more commonly uses the term to denote the whole number of the elect, or all who shall finally be sanctified and saved. This portion of mankind he considers as composing the church universal, which is a spiritual body, of which Christ is the spiritual head. To this purpose he speaks in the first chapter of this epistle. He says, God hath set Christ "at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body." In this comprehensive sense the apostle uses the term church in the text. He means to signify by it the whole church of the first-born in heaven, or all who shall be set up as monuments to display the riches of divine grace to the whole intelligent creation.

Let us next inquire,

II. When the Deity formed his purpose of redeeming the church from among men.

God was under no natural necessity of forming this or any other purpose. His nature did not irresistibly constrain him either to create or to redeem the world. It depended solely upon his will, whether he should bring angels and men into existence; whether he should make them in his own moral image; whether he should suffer any of them to fall into sin; and whether, if any of them should fall into sin, he would save the whole or only a part of the guilty, through the sufferings and death of a Mediator. In a word, God was perfectly free and voluntary in forming the whole scheme of redemption. Hence

Digitized by Google

it is called "his purpose," "his counsel," and "the good pleasure of his will." But still it is a question, when he formed this benevolent purpose, whether in time or eternity. The text tells us it was in eternity: "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." All the elect are said to have been "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world." Christ is called "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." And St. John tells us, he "saw an angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth." These are plain declarations that the gospel scheme of salvation was formed in eternity; which perfectly accords with every just idea of the divine character. God was self-existent, independent, and absolutely perfect from eternity. He was infinitely able to form his whole plan of operation before he began to operate; and no good reason could possibly exist for his neglecting, a single moment, to fix all future events. Indeed, his own moral rectitude laid him under moral obligation to form the glorious scheme of redemption from the early days of eternity. But here, perhaps, some may doubt whether it be proper to distinguish the divine purpose from the divine nature; or whether actual willing, choosing and determining may be ascribed to the Deity, because these exercises seem to imply some degree of deliberation and suspense. The answer is, though imperfect creatures often deliberate and suspend their judgment, before they choose or determine, yet God, who is absolutely perfect, could never have occasion for deliberation or suspense. As he possessed, from eternity, every divine perfection, so he had, from eternity, an intuitive view of all possible beings, objects and events; which enabled him to form the best possible scheme of things, as early as his own existence. We can as easily conceive of an eternal purpose, as of an eternal power, wisdom or goodness. We can as easily conceive of eternal motion as eternal rest. We can as easily conceive of God's determining from eternity, as of his existing from eternity. And if we only admit the truth of his existing from eternity, we must necessarily admit the truth of his decreeing from eternity to redeem the church through the atonement of Christ. Any other supposition must carry the idea of imperfection and mutability in Him who is without variableness or shadow of turning. The way is now prepared to inquire,

Digitized by Google

III. Why God was graciously pleased to devise and adopt, from eternity, the great scheme of man's redemption. To this inquiry the apostle gives a general answer in the text. He says, it was "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God." Moved by infinite benevolence, the Deity determined to make himself known through the medium of his works; and, among all possible works, he saw the work of redemption to be the best adapted to answer this glorious and important purpose. He knew that his creatures could not see the natural and moral excellency of his nature, unless he actually displayed himself in his works. It was their imperfection, therefore, which rendered any exhibitions of his glory necessary. Could they have looked directly into his mind, as he can into theirs, there would have been no occasion for the creation of the heavens and the earth, or for the existence of natural or moral evil, or for the incarnation and sufferings of Christ, or for any of the visible scenes and retributions of eternity. All the ends of creation might have been completely answered, by the bare existence of rational, holy and immortal creatures, had such creatures been capable of seeing all the perfections of God, without the medium of his works. But though the imperfection of created beings was the general reason why God chose to act himself out before their eyes, yet it may be still further inquired, why he chose to act himself out in the work of redemption. In answer to this, the following observations may perhaps afford some light and satisfaction.

1. God chose the work of redemption because it was the only one in which he could display all his perfections before the minds of his intelligent creatures. He might have created different objects, and fixed different orders and series of events; but none of these could have unfolded his whole character. This will be evident, if we only consider the various modes of operation which he might have chosen and pursued.

He might have formed just such a material system as now exists. He might have formed angels and men holy and happy, and preserved them from sin and misery forever. This is certainly a supposable case; because the same divine influence which first formed them in the divine image, could have preserved that image through every period of their existence.

Digitized by Google

And had God treated angels and men in this manner, he would have displayed great goodness to the inhabitants of heaven and earth, and established a state of things almost infinitely different from what has actually taken place. But such a mode of divine operation would not have discovered either the justice, or grace of God; because perfectly innocent creatures could not have been proper objects of either vindictive justice, or pardoning mercy.

Again: God might have preserved both angels and men in a state of holiness and happiness for a certain season, and then subjected only a few individuals to endless sin and misery. This mode of codnuct would have displayed divine benevolence to the holy and happy part of the moral system, and divine sovereignty and justice to the sinful and miserable part. But still, this order of things would have left forgiving grace entirely undiscovered.

Once more: We may suppose that God might have preserved angels and men in a holy and happy state, for ages and ages, and then annihilated the whole moral creation. This, like the last-mentioned series of events, would have forever concealed from the view of creatures the sovereign grace of God, in forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.

These three schemes of divine operation are the only ones which could have been devised, different from the scheme of redemption revealed in the gospel. And since neither of these could have displayed all the perfections of God, this was a good reason why he should prefer the work of redemption to all other ways of making himself known. In this way, he can cause his grace to reign through righteousness unto eternal life, in them that are saved; and, at the same time, manifest his justice in the everlasting punishment of the finally impenitent and incorrigible. And as this was the only possible way of displaying all his perfections, so he determined, from eternity, to exhibit his whole character to all intelligent beings in the face of Jesus Christ.

2. Another reason why God devised and adopted the work of redemption, was, because there was no other way by which he could so clearly and fully manifest any of his perfections. We have just observed that there was no other way by which he could discover all his perfections; but we now further observe,

Digitized by Google

that there was no other by which he could display any of his perfections, in their highest beauty and glory. The other methods of manifesting himself, which have been mentioned, would have given created beings some apprehension of some of his natural and moral attributes; but the method of redeeming love displays them all in the clearest and strongest light.

To illustrate this general idea, let us begin with the attribute of divine wisdom, which the apostle particularly mentions in the text. He says, it was the intent of God in redeeming the church, to make known his manifold wisdom to all the principalities and powers in the heavenly world. And what other method could have been so well adapted to display this divine attribute in its glory? The plan of redemption is the deepest design that could be formed, and the most surpassing all created wisdom. "Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh." The united wisdom of angels and men could never have discovered the way of reconciling justice and mercy in the pardon of sinners, by the incarnation and death of the divine Redeemer. Besides, the way of saving sinners through the atonement of Christ, displays not only the deepest, but the most manifold wisdom. It is the most complicated scheme conceivable. Though God had created as many worlds as there are sands on the sea shore, and made as many species of creatures as he has made individuals; yet he could not have displayed such manifold wisdom in the formation and government of such a system, as he has displayed in raising up the church out of the ruins of the apostasy. This scheme combines and contrasts the most opposite things in nature, and brings them all into subserviency to one great and ultimate end. It makes sin promote holiness, misery promote happiness, darkness promote light, confusion promote order, and the greatest discord promote the most intimate and inviolable union. To adapt all these things in order, in weight, and in measure, to each other, so as to promote the greatest amount of holiness and happiness in the universe, displays the greatest depth and extent of divine wisdom; and must finally constrain all intelligent and holy beings to cry out, in raptures of admiration and gratitude, "O the depth of the riches. both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

The *power* of God might, indeed, have been seen in the cre-



Digitized by Google

ation, preservation and government of perfectly holy and obedient creatures; but this divine attribute is more illustriously displayed in carrying on the work of redemption. In this work, the exceeding greatness of God's power is exerted, in subduing the hearts of sinners, and in maintaining his throne and authority in the hearts of believers. Nor is this all; for all the powers of darkness are combined against the members of the church militant, and it requires the continual exertion of God's omnipotence to restrain and conquer all his and their enemies. So that the power of God is much more visibly displayed, in earth and in hell, in governing his rebellious creatures, than it could have been in reigning over entirely dutiful and loyal subjects. Again:

God gives the brightest display of his goodness, as well as of his power and wisdom, in the work of redemption. This, many are slow of heart to believe. They imagine God would have discovered more goodness in preserving angels and men in a state of perpetual holiness and happiness, than he has done by suffering sin and misery to enter into the world, and saving only a part of mankind from endless ruin, through the death and mediation of Christ. For, though the plan of redemption, which involves sin and misery, may raise the general happiness of the universe to a great and glorious height; yet they still apprehend that God might have formed a system without natural or moral evil, which would have more fully displayed his infinite benevolence. Might not God, they ask, by creating more worlds, and more intelligent creatures, with more enlarged powers and faculties, have produced much more happiness than can result from the work of redemption? Another question will fully answer this. Did infinite wisdom and goodness discern and choose the best plan possible? If this be answered in the affirmative, the unavoidable consequence is, that the plan of redemption is the very best plan, to promote the highest good of the universe. And it must of necessity produce this effect; because it most fully and clearly displays the whole weight of the divine character, which is absolutely necessary to the highest felicity of God and all holy beings. Hence the scheme of redemption will finally display the goodness of God to the best advantage, by making it appear to all intelligences that he has raised the happiness of the universe to a higher degree than it was possible to raise it in any other way.

Digitized by Google

Furthermore: God's holiness, or hatred of sin, is set in the most amiable and striking light in the work of redemption. He would have manifested the purity of his nature, had he doomed all the human race, as he did the fallen angels, to hopeless ruin; but the sufferings and death of Christ, in the room of sinners, have given a brighter display of his vindictive justice, than could have been given by any punishment inflicted upon the guilty. All intelligent beings must look to the cross of Christ to discover the strongest expressions of God's displeasure against sin. There divine justice appears in its perfect purity, and free from all mixture of partiality or malevolence. God set forth his Son as a propitiation for sin, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth. And Christ proclaimed his righteousness in actions which spoke louder than words, and which gave the highest testimony to the whole universe that he perfectly hates sin, whilst he forgives the penitent and believing sinner. It is also the nature and tendency of the gospel to raise up vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. The gift of a Saviour, the offers of mercy, the means used to bring them to repentance, the strivings of the Spirit, together with the patience and forbearance of God, give the impenitent an opportunity of filling up the measure of their guilt, and of preparing themselves for the most signal displays of divine justice, in their future and eternal punishment. So that the amiable and awful attribute of divine justice will be far more clearly displayed through the medium of the gospel, than it could have been through any other medium.

The same may be said of the sovereignty of God. It is true the whole chain of created existence, from the highest to the lowest link, discovers divine sovereignty. There is a visible superiority and inferiority among all the creatures of God, from the first angel down to the meanest insect. And this diversity in the powers and capacities of intelligent and unintelligent beings, discovers the sovereignty of their great Creator. But still his sovereignty appears in a far more interesting light, in doing what he will with his own, and disposing of the several grades of created natures according to his own absolute pleasure. How often and how clearly has he displayed his sovereignty, in carrying on the work of redemption! He has provided a Saviour for fallen men, and left fallen angels to

Digitized by Google

perish without remedy. He has sent the gospel to one nation, and not to another. He has bestowed his special grace upon one person, and not upon another. He has had compassion on whom he would have compassion, and whom he would he has hardened. He has decreed the characters and condition of all moral agents, from eternity. And he will dispose of all exactly according to his eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. When the great work of redemption is finished, it will give an astonishing display of divine sovereignty towards every created being in the universe.

We have already observed that the work of redemption discovers the grace of God, and we must here add that it displays his grace in the brightest colors. To devise the scheme of salvation was a height of grace, to which the thoughts of finite creatures could never have soared, had it not been discovered in the face of Christ; but the means to accomplish this gracious purpose are still more astonishing. God knew it could not be effected without the most extraordinary exertions and the most extraordinary sacrifices. He knew he must sacrifice the holiness and happiness of myriads of angels and men, and, what was infinitely more than all this, that he must sacrifice on the cross his dearly beloved Son, who was the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. The scheme of redemption is so constructed, that not only the effects wrought, but the means used, conspire to display the height and depth, the length and breadth, of divine grace. Had God pardoned all the guilty, without the death of a substitute, he would have displayed real grace. Had he pardoned a part of the guilty, through the death of a mere creature, he would have displayed sovereign grace. But in his eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, he displays not only sovereign grace, but sovereign grace in the most sovereign manner, and at the highest possible expense. The infinite pains he has taken to sanctify and save the church, will forever display the exceeding riches of his grace to principalities and powers, as well as to the distinguished monuments of his sovereign mercy. Thus it appears, that the work of redemption displays not only the manifold wisdom of God, but all his other perfections, in a more clear and illustrious manner than they could have been displayed through any other medium. And this was a weighty

Digitized by Google

reason why God formed his eternal purpose of redeeming the sinful children of men through the death and mediation of the Lord of glory. But,

3. There was another important reason why God determined to make himself known by the work of redemption. He saw it was necessary, not only to display all his perfections, and to display them all in the clearest manner, but also to prepare the minds of all moral beings to view them with the greatest attention and sensibility. He meant not only to give them an opportunity to see himself, but to awaken their attention, and fix it upon his great and amiable character. And nothing could be better adapted to this end than to place them in a situation which would render all the displays of his glory highly interesting to themselves. Accordingly he devised and adopted the work of redemption, which will eventually place every mortal being in a situation to view all the divine perfections in the most interesting light. It has placed all accountable creatures in a state of probation; which is of all situations the most critical and important, because it suspends their future and eternal interests upon their conduct, during a short if not an uncertain period. It has also connected good and bad angels with good and bad men, and made them all instrumental in forming each other's characters, and preparing each other for their final condition. And when the work of redemption is finished, it will fix them all in such different and interesting circumstances, that they can never see nor contemplate each other, without seeing God, and feeling the whole weight of his infinite perfections. Where will the elect angels be able to turn their eyes, without being struck with the sovereignty of God in making them such holy and happy creatures? Where will the non-elect angels be able to turn their eyes, without being struck with the sovereignty of God in the whole course of his conduct towards them, both in heaven and in hell? Where will the church of the first-born be able to turn their eyes, without being struck with the sovereignty of God in forming them vessels of mercy, and making them kings and priests, through the blood of the Lamb? And where will lost men be able to turn their eyes, without being struck with the sovereignty of God in giving them existence, offering them mercy, and leaving them to perish in their sins forever? Neither the happy nor the miserable will be



Digitized by Google

able to fix their attention upon any created or uncreated object, without a lively sense of the manifold wisdom, the sovereign grace and awful justice of God. While the inhabitants of heaven behold the smoke of the torments of the damned, they will view all the divine attributes with joyful admiration; and while the spirits in prison realize the raptures of joy and praise in the mansions of the blessed, they will painfully feel the full weight of all the perfections of the Deity. In a word, the winding up of the gospel scheme of salvation will turn the attention of all created beings upon God himself, and constrain them to see and feel his character, with the highest sensibility, to all eternity. Thus we see some wise and holy reasons, why God formed his eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord; or why he chose to make himself known to principalities, and powers, and all other intelligent creatures, through the medium of Christ in the work of redemption.

It now remains to improve the subject.

1. If God freely chose from eternity to make himself known by the work of redemption, then we may safely conclude that this work was not devised for the purpose of mending or repairing the moral system. The Sublapsarians suppose that God originally intended to make the moral creation perfectly holy and happy; but the defection of Lucifer and the apostasy of Adam defeated his first and best design. In this unhappy case, therefore, to repair as much as possible the injuries done to the moral system, he devised the scheme of raising up from the ruins of the apostasy a pure and holy church, to display the riches of his grace towards the vessels of mercy. But if what has been said be true, there is no foundation for such an opinion as this, which is a plain impeachment of the divine character. It appears from the whole tenor of this discourse, that God comprehended, in his eternal purpose, all the sin and misery, as well as all the holiness and happiness, which ever have, or ever will come into existence; so that the apostasy of both angels and men was one essential part of the scheme of redemption. God saw it was absolutely necessary that both moral and natural evils should exist, in order to open the way for the most complete manifestation of his own glory, and, therefore, comprised these evils in his eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. Hence he has never had

Digitized by Google

the least occasion to revise, correct, or amend his original design, or to repair any absolute injury done to his perfect system. Every thing in creation and providence has taken place just as he always intended; and not a single event has ever happened to mar his character, or disconcert his first designs. One event has always followed another in the very order and connection which he established from eternity; and one event will still follow another in that order and connection, until the great and complicated work of redemption is brought to its final consummation, and the whole universe is filled with the brightest displays of the divine glory.

2. If God formed the scheme of salvation from eternity, then to deny the doctrine of the divine decrees, is to rob him of all his glory in the work of redemption. The apostle calls this work, "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." And if he devised this wise and benevolent design, then all the glory of it justly belongs to him. It is the dictate of reason, to ascribe the merit or glory of any important undertaking to the agent who formed the wise and useful design. If, therefore, before the foundation of the world, or the existence of any created being, God himself concerted, adjusted and adopted the whole plan of salvation, the whole glory of it is all his own. The infinite merit of forming a scheme infinitely better than any other being could have formed, is to be wholly ascribed to his boundless wisdom and benevolence. But to deny his eternal decrees is to rob him of all this glory, and to bring the highest reproach upon his character. Should one person be saved, whom he did not intend should be saved; should one person be lost, whom he did not intend should be lost; should one pain be endured, which he did not intend should be endured; should one sin be committed, which he did not intend should be committed; or, in a word, should one event finally take place, which he did not intend should take place; it would demonstrate the imperfection of his nature. And the least natural or moral imperfection in the Deity would divest him of all his glory, and render him an object unworthy of the trust and confidence of created beings. For, if God could, either intentionally or unintentionally, either cause or suffer any event to take place, detrimental to the highest good of the universe, no intelligent creature could have the least security of his happiness,

Digitized by Google

or even of his existence. To deny, therefore, that God comprehended and determined all things that ever has existed, or ever shall exist, is to rob him of all his glory, to subvert the whole scheme of redemption, and to sap the foundation of all happiness in the universe. If there can be any fundamental error, it is the denial of the doctrine of the divine decrees.

3. If it was the supreme purpose of God, in concerting the work of redemption, to make the brightest display of himself, then the ministers of the gospel ought to exhibit all the doctrines contained in it, in the most plain and intelligible manner. It is the great design of preaching to unfold the glorious scheme of salvation. Paul viewed his office in this light, and made it his main object to unfold as fully as possible the whole plan of redemption. He says he meant "to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God." The gospel was wrapt up in types and figures for many ages; but when the vail of the temple was rent at the crucifixion of Christ, the shadows of the Mosaic dispensation vanished, and the mystery of the gospel was clearly disclosed. And this mystery the apostle meant to explain so fully and clearly, that all who heard him preach, not only might, but must, understand the great scheme of redemption. In consequence of this, he could appeal to his hearers, that he had faithfully discharged his office: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." He supposed, the more fully and clearly he preached all the doctrines of the gospel, the more fully and clearly the glory of God would be displayed. This opinion is founded in the very nature and design of the gospel. For if the whole scheme of salvation is calculated to display the glory of God, then every part of it, in its proper connection, must have a natural tendency to promote the same desirable purpose. It is, therefore, the most direct way to promote the glory of God, to preach every doctrine of the gospel as plainly as possible. If the whole scheme of the gospel was the best that could be devised; then it must reflect honor upon God, to make it appear that he alone devised it. If it was necessary, in order to carry this scheme into execution, to introduce sin and misery into the moral system; then it must reflect honor upon God, to

Digitized by Google

make it appear that he designedly introduced these evils for this wise and benevolent purpose. If it was best that all moral beings should be placed in a state of trial, in which they might have an opportunity to establish or to lose their original rectitude; then it must reflect honor upon God, to make it appear that he did designedly place them in such a critical and dangerous situation. If it was best that the first man should be the public head of his posterity; then it must reflect honor upon God, to make it appear that he did suspend the moral character of the whole human race upon the conduct of Adam in paradise. If it was best that only a part of mankind should be saved; then it must reflect honor upon God, to make it appear that he determined that only a part should be saved. If it was best that a part of mankind should be finally lost; then it must reflect honor upon God, to make it appear that he determined a part should finally be lost. In a word, if it was best that the work of redemption should be accomplished; then it must reflect honor upon God, to make it appear that he made all the means necessary to accomplish it absolutely certain, by his eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is utterly impossible to believe that the gospel was devised on purpose to give intelligent creatures the most clear and just conceptions of God, and yet believe that the preaching of the gospel plainly has a tendency to lead mankind into false conceptions of the divine character. The truth is, that preaching the gospel partially never fails of leading hearers into error. They must form wrong ideas of God, and of the doctrines of the gospel, if the most important parts of the work of redemption are either concealed, or denied. If, therefore, ministers of the gospel wish to glorify God, if they wish to enlighten and convert sinners, if they wish to edify and comfort believers, if they wish to suppress dangerous errors, if they wish to check the progress of infidelity, and promote the great interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, let them declare the whole counsel of God, and unfold, as clearly and fully as possible, the great scheme of redemption. This is their indispensable duty, and in the faithful discharge of this duty they will find a great present satisfaction, and a great future reward.

4. If it be the great design of the work of redemption, to display the glory of God, then it is a peculiar privilege to be al-

Digitized by Google

lowed to preach this everlasting gospel to a sinful and perishing world. The apostle Paul entertained a lively and grateful sense of the favor of God in giving him this desirable employment: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." At another time, speaking of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to his trust, he breaks out in this grateful language: "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." The ministerial office is a good office, and affords the best advantages to those who faithfully discharge it, to attain all that is worthy to be desired in the present life. It gives them a peculiar opportunity of acquiring the largest portion of divine knowledge. All good ministers have a high relish for divine knowledge, and desire to dive into the deep things of God, and to enlarge their minds with clear and extensive views of his character, his designs and works. Deep and critical researches in the great work of redemption, never fail to gratify this pure desire after pure knowledge. Studious and pious divines enter the widest field of mental improvement. They move in a higher sphere than mathematicians and astronomers, or natural and moral philosophers. These study the science of means; but divines soar to a higher region, and study the science of moral ends, which is the highest science in nature. The unsearchable riches of Christ afford materials for the most noble and agreeable discoveries. These are the objects which now employ the attention of principalities and powers in heavenly places, and will employ their attention, and the attention of all holy creatures, to endless ages. The ministers of the gospel may be considered as the lowest order in the highest school in the universe. The knowledge of all other arts and sciences shall fail; but the divine science which they are pursuing shall last forever, and their progress in it shall be like the rising sun, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

But the improvement of the heart is more desirable than the improvement of the understanding; and the ministerial office is highly favorable to the growth of grace. While pious ministers are feeding their people with the sincere milk of the word, they enjoy the best opportunity of increasing their holiness, as

Digitized by Google

well as knowledge. Divine truth has a direct tendency to nourish and strengthen every holy and benevolent affection. Hence our Saviour said to his Father, in his last prayer for his disciples, "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." While ministers are pursuing their proper business, their minds are sensibly employed about the most important truths and the most glorious and amiable objects. They are naturally led to contemplate God as forming the great scheme of redemption; as entering upon the execution of it, at the creation of angels and men; as pursuing it, in the course of providence, ever since to the present day; and as still carrying it on to the second coming of Christ; when all its glorious fruits and effects shall fully appear, and be perfectly enjoyed by all holy beings, without interruption and without end. While musing on such boundless and interesting scenes, they will feel the fire of devotion kindling in their breasts, and find their holy calling enlarging and comforting their holy hearts, and preparing them for the enjoyment of all the good which shall flow from the work of redemption.

These opportunities of growing in knowledge and in grace are mere personal advantages; but the ministerial office affords another, which is much more valuable and important, and that is, the opportunity of doing the greatest good that can be done by created agents. To ministers, in particular, is this grace given, that they should serve God in the gospel of his Son, and be employed as instruments in forming vessels of mercy, and qualifying them to be members of the church of the first-born; who will be the most amiable creatures in the universe, and above all others serve to display the glory of God in the sight of principalities and powers in heavenly places. And what greater service can be done for God and man, than to fit immortal souls to display his glory, and enjoy his favor forever?

Permit me now to apply this subject to the Pastor elect.

Dear Sir, — Let your heart rise in gratitude to God, who is about to grant you the great privilege of preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ. This is the most desirable work in which you can be engaged. It is to unfold the mystery which has been hidden for ages from the greatest part of mankind, and which displays all the perfections of the Deity in the most amiable light. If I should tell you that precious and

Digitized by Google

perishing souls were about to be committed to your care and instruction, I should remind you of a serious and pertinent truth. But this subject holds up to your view a greater and more solemn truth; that the glorious gospel is committed to your trust; in which not only you and your people, but God, and Christ, and all moral beings, will be forever deeply interested. This trust, solemn and important as it is, we have too much reason to fear, has often been betrayed by those to whom it has been committed. And are you in no danger of betraying it? May you not conceal or corrupt those truths which you ought to explain and inculcate? And, instead of employing all your learning and ingenuity in unfolding the great scheme of redemption, may you not exert all your abilities to make men ignorant of the glorious gospel of the blessed God? But if you understand the gospel you will be able, and if you love the gospel you will be disposed, to keep the faith amidst all the errors and delusions which may prevail through the land. You will not only teach the pure doctrines of the gospel, but contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. You will not forget that you are set for the defence of the gospel; and must be responsible to him whom you profess to serve, for the corruptions of Christianity which you either propagate, or do not endeavor, to the utmost of your power, to expose and restrain. If you preach the same gospel which Paul preached, and in the same manner, you may expect to find some will become your enemies, because you tell them the truth. But if you are faithful, you will find a sufficient shield and support in the gospel itself, which, in its final operation, will secure the interests of the universe, and your own interests among the rest. Seek first the kingdom of God, and you have the promise of Christ, that all things necessary shall be added. Go on your way rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God, which shall be fully displayed by that gospel you preach. You have nothing to fear but unfaithfulness, which alone can rob you of your future and eternal reward. Only take heed to yourself, and to your doctrines, and you shall both save yourself and them that hear you, and be each other's joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.

This Church and Congregation are about to receive a minister, from whom they have reason to expect a faithful discharge

Digitized by Google

of his duty. And if he does plainly and faithfully unfold the great scheme of salvation, they will derive great good, or great evil, from his ministry. The gospel will make impressions on their minds, which never can be erased, and which will prove a savor of life unto life, or a savor of death unto death. Those who sit under the best preaching, are of all persons in the most hazardous situation. While the kingdom of God is brought nigh unto them from Sabbath to Sabbath, they must either enter in, or reject the counsel of God against themselves. But nothing can aggravate their guilt so fast, or raise it to so high a degree, as rejecting the counsel of God; because this is opposing the whole scheme of redemption, and all the designs and works of God, as well as all the good of the universe. How can those escape who neglect so great a salvation? To oppose the gospel, is to rush on certain and awful destruction. So says the divine truth itself: "Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."



Digitized by Google

# SERMON XI.

## DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL THE FOOD OF CHRISTIANS.

ORDINATION OF MR. EDWARD WHIPPLE, TO THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN CHARLTON, JAN. 25, 1804.

---

**I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.—1 Corinthians 3: 2.**

THE apostle Paul, in passing through Greece, came to Corinth, where he found a Jewish synagogue, and in which he preached for several Sabbaths, endeavoring to convince the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. But after they openly and violently opposed the gospel, he turned to the Gentiles, and preached among them a year and six months. During this time, he was so successful in his work as to gather a large and flourishing church. But after he left this happy society of Christians, they fell into great animosities and contentions about the preachers and the doctrines of the gospel. To heal these difficulties, and reunite them in affection and sentiment, appears to be his principal design in this epistle. He addresses them on the subject of peace and harmony, with peculiar tenderness and pathos. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." And to convince them of the peculiar propriety of his giving them this exhortation, he afterwards observes, that he



Digitized by Google

had endeavored to prevent all religious controversies among them by preaching no other than the most plain and profitable doctrines of the gospel. "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." Truth is the same to the mind, that food is to the body. Food nourishes and strengthens the body, and truth nourishes and strengthens the mind. There is a propriety, therefore, in the apostle's making use of milk and meat, which are different species of food, as metaphors to represent different sorts of truth, which he preached at different times, to those who were under different circumstances. By his feeding the Corinthians with milk instead of meat, we are to understand that he taught them such doctrines as were best adapted to their peculiar character and condition, instead of others which he might have taught them, but which they were then unable to receive and improve to their spiritual benefit. This is the plain and obvious sense of the text; which naturally leads us, on the present occasion, to inquire,

I. What doctrines the apostle did preach to the Corinthians.

II. Why he calls the doctrines, which he preached to the Corinthians, milk.

III. Why he preached these, rather than any other doctrines, to that people.

I. Let us inquire what doctrines the apostle did preach to the Corinthians.

In teaching any art or science, it is necessary to begin with its most essential and fundamental principles. The same mode of instruction seems proper, in preaching the gospel to those who never heard it. And since this was the case with the Corinthians, we may justly suppose that the apostle would adapt his preaching to their peculiar state, and, in the first place, teach them the nature and design of the gospel, which would necessarily lead him to unfold the great and leading doctrines of Christianity. This supposition we find confirmed by his own declarations. "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." And in another place he says, "According to the grace of God which is given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the founda-

Digitized by Google

tion." These passages afford a strong presumptive evidence, that the apostle taught the most essential and fundamental doctrines of the gospel to the Corinthians. But we shall find more ample evidence of this, if we now examine the contents of his two epistles to that people.

The moral depravity of human nature lies at the foundation of the gospel. If all men were not involved in moral corruption and guilt, they would not need that salvation which the gospel reveals and offers. "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." The apostle could not preach the gospel intelligibly to the Corinthians, without teaching them the doctrine of moral depravity. Accordingly we find him bringing this doctrine into view, in order to illustrate the redeeming love of Christ. These are his words: "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." He means, dead in trespasses and sins, which is complete moral depravity. And in the chapter preceding the text, he describes the entire depravity of the heart, by its leading influence upon the understanding. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." These are plain instances of the apostle's teaching the Corinthians the total depravity of human nature.

This sentiment is intimately connected with that of the renovation of the heart by the special influence of the Divine Spirit. For if natural men are entirely destitute of holiness and wholly under the dominion of sin, then their hearts must be renewed before they can become heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Our Saviour says, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The reason he assigns is, "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh." The necessity of regeneration arises entirely from the total corruption of the human heart. The apostle, therefore, having taught the Corinthians the doctrine of total depravity, equally taught them the doctrine of regeneration by the special operation of the Deity. "God," says he, "who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." He exhibits the same sentiment in another form. "Now he that hath wrought

Digitized by Google

us for the selfsame thing is God." By this expression he meant to teach the Corinthians that they could not be prepared for heaven, unless they were formed into the divine image, by the special operation of the Divine Spirit.

The immediate effect of regeneration is pure, disinterested love. "That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit." The Spirit, in his special operation upon the heart, conforms it to the moral image of God. God is love. Regeneration consists in shedding abroad the love of God in the heart, which was before entirely destitute of true benevolence. This holy love, which is the fruit of the Spirit, is the essence of all true religion. So the apostle taught the Corinthians, in the most plain and pointed language. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." And in farther describing the peculiar qualities of this holy love, he says, "Charity seeketh not her own." By this it appears, that he inculcated upon the Corinthians the doctrine of disinterested benevolence, as essentially different from every selfish affection, and as absolutely necessary to the performance of any thing, that is truly acceptable in the sight of God.

Saving faith naturally flows from love. We read "faith worketh by love," and "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Love to God produces love to Christ; and love to Christ is the very essence of that faith, which is connected with eternal life. Accordingly the apostle exhorted the Corinthians not only to become reconciled to God, but also immediately to embrace Jesus Christ, as the only ground of pardon and salvation. He speaks as though it were his principal object in preaching, to urge the immediate duty of saving faith. "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambas-



Digitized by Google

sadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." The grace of God here, as in many other places, means the gospel, which the apostle tenderly and solemnly urges the Corinthians immediately to embrace. For he closes his exhortation with these words. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

After men have become reconciled to God, and received Christ by faith, they still need the Spirit of promise to carry on a work of sanctification in their hearts. Sanctification is the same as continued regeneration; and the same divine influence, which at first reconciles the heart to God, is constantly necessary to keep it in a state of reconciliation. This sentiment the apostle taught the believers at Corinth. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." He does, indeed, represent believers as well as unbelievers as constantly dependent upon the divine agency, in all their internal exercises as well as external actions. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." He could not have asserted the doctrine of divine agency in human actions in plainer or stronger terms.

The doctrine of the final perseverance of saints is an infallible consequence of the divine agency in their sanctification. If it be true that God does begin and carry on a work of grace in the hearts of all true believers, then they will certainly endure unto the end, and secure the salvation of their souls. Upon this ground, the apostle assures the Corinthian believers that they should eventually reach the kingdom of heaven. He says, "Now he which establisheth us with you in Christ,—is God; who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." He afterwards observes to the same persons, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

Digitized by Google

Here it is evident that the apostle taught the Corinthians that all real saints shall persevere in holiness, and finally enjoy eternal life.

As God begins and carries on a good work in whom he pleases, so divine sovereignty is an essential doctrine of the gospel. This, therefore, is another sentiment which the apostle plainly preached to the Corinthians. He says in a few verses below the text, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." In the second epistle, he sets the amiable and awful sovereignty of God in a more striking light. "Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish." These expressions put it beyond a doubt, that the apostle preached the doctrine of divine sovereignty in its full latitude, and taught the Corinthians to believe that God has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and causes whom he will to perish.

The doctrine of personal election is a principal branch of divine sovereignty, which the apostle also taught the saints at Corinth. In this first epistle he addresses them as the chosen vessels of mercy: "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty." "That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." The apostle considered the doctrine of election, as having a happy tendency to give mankind high and becoming thoughts of God, and low and abasing thoughts of themselves; and therefore did not omit such a useful and practical subject in the course of his preaching. The doctrine of election naturally carries our thoughts back to the early days of eternity, when the glorious scheme of the gospel was concerted and adopted by the ever blessed Trinity. This plainly revealed, though in some respects profoundly mysterious doctrine, the apostle abundantly thought the Corinthians. He brings it into view at the beginning and end of both his epistles; but especially in his

Digitized by Google

benediction at the close of the last. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." In this short and comprehensive sentence, the divinity, personality and equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are clearly and distinctly exhibited, and the practical use and importance of this great truth plainly taught.

Thus we find, from the two letters which the apostle wrote to the Corinthians, that he publicly and plainly taught them the doctrine of disinterested love, the doctrine of saving faith, the doctrine of total depravity, the doctrine of regeneration, the doctrine of divine agency in human actions, the doctrine of the final perseverance of saints, the doctrine of divine sovereignty in the conversion of sinners, the doctrine of personal election to eternal life, and the doctrine of three equally divine persons in the only living and true God.

Let us now inquire,

II. Why he called these doctrines milk.

"I have fed you with milk, and not with meat." This certainly refers to the doctrines which he had preached to the Corinthians, and which have been ascertained under the preceding particular. And we find in his epistle to the Hebrews, that he used the same metaphor of milk, to represent those peculiar and essential doctrines of the gospel. "When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk, is unskilful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." This passage throws light upon the metaphor in the text, and leads us to observe,

1. The doctrines which Paul preached to the Corinthians may properly be called milk, because they are easy to be understood.

Milk is much easier to digest than meat. Meat is for men, but milk is for babes. Those of the weakest constitution can bear this light and easy food. So the first principles of the oracles of God, are plain and level to the lowest capacity. It requires attention, rather than deep penetration, to understand the doctrines of grace which naturally arise from the mutual

Digitized by Google

relation between God and his sinful creatures. Let men only realize that they are the creatures of God, that they have broken his laws, that they have incurred his displeasure, and that they are in his hands, as the clay is in the hands of the potter; and these very doctrines, which the apostle calls milk, will naturally occur to their minds, and be easily understood. It is very easy for any sinners, when they are constrained to look into their own hearts, to understand the doctrine of total depravity, the necessity of regeneration, the sovereignty of God in having mercy on whom he will have mercy, and all the other doctrines of the gospel which are inseparably connected with these. Even a youth, who has spent his whole time in vanity, as soon as he falls under conviction, feels that he is an enemy to God, that he deserves to perish, that God has a right to save or destroy him, and that he can have no ground of hope but in the doctrine of election, which assures him that God can and will save some. There are no truths in the Bible more level to every capacity, than the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, which were designed to give saving knowledge to the weakest, meanest and vilest of mankind. Hence the apostle says to the Corinthians, in the beginning of his first epistle, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." And among that number he says there were "not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble." The common people heard and understood Christ's preaching, while the wise and learned called his doctrines hard sayings. The fundamental doctrines of the gospel approve themselves to the understanding and conscience of every person who will attend to them. Paul tells the Corinthians to whom he preached these doctrines, that he had, by manifestation of the truth, commended himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. The Assembly of divines, who composed the Shorter Catechism, were men of superior knowledge and wisdom; and they supposed that the same doctrines which Paul preached to the Corinthians, were proper to be taught to children and youth, as well as to others of riper years, and better capacities. Indeed, it appears from the experience of ages, that all who are capable of knowing their guilty and perishing condition by nature, are equally capable of understanding the doctrines which Christ and the apostles

Digitized by Google

preached. They are as easy to be understood by the weakest mind, as milk is to be digested by the weakest stomach.

2. The apostle might properly call the doctrines which he preached to the Corinthians milk, because they are highly pleasing to the pious heart.

Milk is not only easy to the stomach, but agreeable to the palate. The Scripture represents milk and honey as the richest dainties in nature. What is sweeter than honey, or what is more grateful to the taste than milk? So the doctrines of grace are delicious to those who have tasted and seen that the Lord is good. The apostle Peter represents all Christians, "as new born babes" who "desire the sincere milk of the word." The sincere believers at Corinth admired the doctrines of grace, and were highly pleased with the apostle for preaching such precious truths, of which he reminds them in his second epistle. "We write none other things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I trust ye shall acknowledge to the end; as also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus." All true saints have drunk into one spirit, and agree in relishing the pure doctrines of grace. They are never better pleased than while they hear the doctrines of total depravity, special grace, divine sovereignty, and disinterested love, clearly explained and illustrated. They are often so gratified under the preaching of these distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, that they naturally express their high satisfaction in the language of the text, and emphatically say, "We have been fed."

3. The doctrines which Paul preached to the Corinthians, may be properly called milk, because they are nourishing as well as pleasing, to the children of God.

It is the nature of milk to promote the health and growth of the human body; and it is equally the nature of divine truth to improve the heart as well as the understanding of true believers. The converts at Corinth made swift advances in knowledge and holiness, while they were fed and nourished by the doctrines according to godliness. This the apostle saw with pleasure, and gratefully acknowledged in his first epistle. "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched

Digitized by Google

by him, in all utterance and in all knowledge; — so that ye come behind in no gift." The doctrines of grace, which are the first principles of Christianity, never fail to nourish, and strengthen, and purify the hearts of real Christians. While they are fed by such precious truths, they will rapidly grow in love, in faith, in joy, and in every holy affection. But if they are denied this food, and fed only with dry, speculative, moral truths, they will languish and decline in their Christian course. Nothing can keep alive holy affections in their hearts, but the exhibition of holy objects. The doctrines which most fully lay open the human heart, and most clearly display the divine character and designs, are the best suited to promote their edification and comfort. While they sit under such pure, evangelical preaching, they will taste the good word of God, feel the powers of the world to come; realize the glorious scenes of eternity; and find themselves daily preparing for that full blaze of light, which will break in upon their minds, when they shall be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. These observations may suffice to illustrate the propriety of the metaphor in the text; and to justify the apostle in saying that he had fed the Corinthians with milk, in preaching nothing but the most plain, the most agreeable, and the most edifying doctrines of the gospel.

We come now to the last thing proposed,

III. To inquire why the apostle preached to the Corinthians such plain and practical doctrines, rather than any others.

To this he gives a general answer in the text. "I have fed you with milk and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." Here he declares that he meant to adapt his preaching to the peculiar state of the Corinthians. And if we consider their internal and external state, we shall easily perceive that both required the apostle to insist entirely upon the plain and primary doctrines of the gospel.

1. Their internal state required such plain preaching. They were Gentiles, who had never been favored with the knowledge of divine revelation. And though they had become celebrated for human learning, and had made great improvements in the arts and sciences, yet they were totally ignorant of the doctrines of the gospel. The apostle told them that it was the design of

Digitized by Google

preaching, to teach them that which they had never discovered by the bare light of nature. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." The minds of the Corinthians being in such a state of total darkness and ignorance, respecting God and divine things, it became the apostle to teach them, step by step, the primary truths of the gospel. He could not preach Jesus Christ and him crucified clearly and intelligibly to them, without unfolding the great scheme of redemption, which originated in the eternal purpose of God to sanctify and save sinners through the sufferings and death of the Son of his love. So that he was under a necessity of feeding them with milk, and not with meat, or of teaching them only the plain and fundamental principles of Christianity, which their minds were able to bear.

2. Their external, as well as internal state required the same mode of preaching. Corinth was a place of learning and of learned men, who studied vain philosophy, and employed it as a weapon to destroy Christianity. The heathen philosophers were fond of maintaining their own religious opinions, in opposition to the pure truths of the gospel; and endeavored to persuade the followers of Christ to renounce their new religion, and return back to their former superstitions and delusions. Nor were they altogether unsuccessful in their attempts to corrupt the professors of Christianity; for we are told that they did in fact overthrow the faith of some. Sensible of the dangerous situation of the believers at Corinth, the apostle labored to establish them in the Christian faith, and effectually guard them against those who lay in wait to deceive. On this account, he found it necessary to give them line upon line, and precept upon precept, and continually inculcate the most essential and fundamental doctrines of the gospel. These afford the strongest internal evidence of the truth and divinity of divine revelation; and carry greater conviction to the minds of common Christians than prophecies or miracles, or any other mere external proofs of Christianity. By declaring the whole counsel of God, and clearly unfolding the nature, design, and fundamental doctrines of the gospel, the apostle took the best method to guard the believers at Corinth against the most plausible and subtle arguments of infidels. Those unlearned Christians were able to

Digitized by Google

understand the internal evidences of Christianity, but they had neither learning nor abilities to compare sacred and profane history, and to discern the connection between divine predictions and the events by which they were visibly fulfilled. Thus it appears, that both the internal and external state of the Corinthians required the apostle to preach only such plain and important doctrines, as were the best suited to establish them in the faith, and guard them against the enemies of the gospel.

It is now time to improve and apply the subject.

1. If the metaphor of milk has been properly explained, then we may easily conjecture what is to be understood by the metaphor of meat. If by milk the apostle means the more plain and important doctrines of the gospel, it seems to be natural to suppose that by meat he means some other sentiments less plain, and less necessary to be known by common Christians. He was thoroughly acquainted with the higher as well as lower branches of Christianity. He was able to teach the dark and difficult, as well as the plain and easy doctrines of divine revelation. And though he has not told us in the text, nor any where else, what were the dark and difficult points of doctrine, which he represents under the metaphor of meat, and which he did not think proper to preach to the people of Corinth, yet we may safely conclude that they were such as respected the following subjects.

First: The rites and ceremonies of the Mosiac dispensation.

These he well understood, as appears by his epistle to the Hebrews, in which he clearly explains their true meaning and design. But we can hardly suppose that he would teach the men of Corinth these dark things, because they were not prepared to understand them. They had not enjoyed the old Testament, which had a peculiar relation to the Jews, with whose customs, and manners, and modes of religion, they had been very little acquainted, and to which they were no longer required to conform. The apostle, therefore, might very properly pass over the Mosaic rites and ceremonies in his preaching to the Corinthians.

So he might, secondly, the types and predictions, in the Old Testament, respecting the character and coming of the promised Messiah. It would have been very difficult to explain these things intelligibly to a people who were destitute of the writings



Digitized by Google

of Moses and the prophets. Nor was it very necessary, seeing Christ had actually come in the flesh, had suffered and died and rose from the dead, and had introduced the gospel dispensation. It is, however, easy to perceive that the types and prophecies concerning Christ, which the Jews in general did not understand, would have been strong meat to the Gentiles, who had never enjoyed their religious advantages. These subjects therefore, were among the number of those which the Corinthians could not bear, and which the apostle would not preach to such young converts to Christianity.

And to these may be added, thirdly, the predictions in the New Testament, concerning the great apostasy in the Christian church; the rise and fall of the Man of sin; the calling in of the Jews; the spread of the gospel in the Millennium; and the state of things from that day to the end of the world. We know the apostle sometimes wrote and preached upon these high points, to which St. Peter alludes in his second epistle. "Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you: As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction." We will not now affirm that the subjects which we have mentioned were the only subjects which the apostle calls strong meat; but we will presume to say that all the subjects which we have mentioned are more difficult to explain and comprehend, than the doctrines which he taught the Corinthians, and which he calls milk.

2. It appears from what has been said in this discourse, that the doctrines which Paul preached to the Corinthians have been greatly misrepresented. He represents them as milk; but others represent them as meat. He represents them as easy to be understood; but others represent them as dark and mysterious. He represents them as agreeable to the pious heart; but others represent them as odious and detestable to every friend of piety and virtue. He represents them as enlightening and edifying to all true believers; but others represent them as discouraging and perplexing to the followers of Christ. There is reason to believe that these misrepresentations of the apostle's preaching have done a great deal of mischief in the Christian

Digitized by Google

world. How many ministers have quoted his own words against himself; and employed the metaphors in the text to justify themselves, not only in neglecting to preach the doctrines which he preached to the Corinthians, but in opposing and stigmatizing those doctrines! And how many people have been strongly prejudiced against the doctrines which Paul preached to the Corinthians, by hearing them represented, by their public teachers, as meat, as strong meat, too strong for any Christians in the world to bear! Can these dangerous misrepresentations be altogether owing to ignorance? Has it not been made to appear that Paul did preach to the Corinthians the doctrine of total depravity, the doctrine of regeneration, the doctrine of disinterested love, the doctrine of divine agency in human actions, the doctrine of personal election to eternal life, and the doctrine of the sacred Trinity? And has it not been made to appear that Paul called these very doctrines milk, and not strong meat? What ground is there, then, to suppose that his words in the text are so generally misrepresented, through a misapprehension of their plain and obvious meaning? There is too much reason to fear that many who have really understood, have designedly misrepresented, the peculiar and important doctrines of the gospel, which Paul preached to the Corinthians, by calling them meat instead of milk. It is extremely natural for those who hate the pure doctrines of Christianity, either to misunderstand them, or misrepresent them; but both the deceivers and deceived in this case, are highly criminal in the sight of God; and unless they receive and obey the truth, they must certainly perish.

3. This subject affords an infallible criterion, by which to determine who are the plainest preachers in point of sentiment. Paul tells us that he fed the Corinthians with milk, and not with meat, while he preached the most essential and important doctrines of Christianity. Those therefore, who preach the same doctrines which Paul preached and called milk, are in reality the plainest preachers, and the easiest to be understood by every class of hearers. They are easier to be understood than those who preach upon the historical parts of Scripture. They are easier to be understood than those who preach upon the prophetical parts of Scripture. They are easier to be understood than those who preach upon the biographical parts of

Digitized by Google

Scripture. They are easier to be understood than those who preach upon the typical parts of Scripture. And they are much easier to be understood than those who deliver sentiments in direct opposition to the doctrines which Paul preached to the Corinthians. There have always been some, ever since the days of the apostles, who have preached against the doctrines which he preached. Some have preached against one, some against another, and some against every doctrine which he preached. And it appears from the most authentic history of the church, that the preachers of this description were the first to introduce metaphysics and vain philosophy into the pulpit. The Socinians, Arians, Pelagians, and other sectaries, who early opposed the pure and simple doctrines which Christ and the apostles taught, were obliged to have recourse to logical, metaphysical and philosophical subtilties, in their own defence. And it is still the case, that those who preach against the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of election, the doctrine of divine sovereignty, the doctrine of divine agency, and the doctrine of total depravity, are constrained, either to renounce reasoning altogether, or else to reason in the most intricate, obscure, unintelligible manner. There never was, and there never can be, any false scheme of religion so easy to explain and understand, as that true scheme of religion which Paul taught the Corinthians. Those, therefore, who preach the very same doctrines which Paul preached, must be, of all others, the plainest preachers in point of sentiment. They preach agreeably to both Scripture and reason; while all others have to oppose both Scripture and reason, which must necessarily involve them in darkness and confusion. Upon this point we may properly appeal to common observation and experience. Go into the congregations who statedly hear those who teach doctrines different from, if not opposite to the doctrines which Paul preached, and will you find that such congregations better understand their minister's sentiments, or are better acquainted with any scheme of religion, than those congregations who sit under the ministers who preach the same doctrines which Paul preached to the Corinthians? Hearers are proper judges of plain preachers; and let the opinion of hearers be taken upon this point, and undoubtedly nine in ten will confidently say that they could never understand any preachers so easily and

Digitized by Google

fully, as those who preached the very same doctrines which Paul preached, and called milk. These doctrines always were and always will be plain and intelligible to all classes of mankind; and it is only the objections, which are made to these plain and fundamental principles of Christianity, that are really dark and hard to be understood.

If the foregoing observations are just, then there is no reason to think that any people are unable to bear the doctrines which Paul preached to the Corinthians. Many preachers seem to imagine that their people are not able to bear the doctrine of total depravity, or the doctrine of regeneration, or the doctrine of election, or the doctrine of divine agency, or the doctrine of the Trinity; and for this reason, suppose it is a point of prudence to pass over these subjects in silence in their public discourses. But this is a great mistake. There is not a congregation in the world, who are unable to bear the doctrines which Paul preached to the Corinthians. Any people who are able to bear any preaching, are able to bear the pure, simple, essential doctrines of the gospel. These are milk, and not strong meat. These are the plainest doctrines which can be preached or heard. Though Paul knew that the Corinthians were not able to bear some divine truths, yet he knew that they were able to bear the doctrines which he actually preached. And it is absurd to suppose that there are any congregations at this day, who are not able to bear the same truths which the Corinthians were able to bear, who had enjoyed no other than the dim light of nature. The truth is, that people have always been unwilling, but not unable to bear the disagreeable truths of the gospel. The plainest truths are the most disagreeable to the depraved heart; and this is the real reason, why people complain that they cannot understand them. Their inability to bear the peculiar doctrines of Christ, lies in their heart, and not in their understanding. So Christ himself told his hearers, who complained of his hard sayings. "Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word." Again he demanded, "If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words. Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." The people at this day are just as able, and just as unwilling, to bear the plain and reproving doctrines of the gospel, as they were in Christ's and the



Digitized by Google

apostle's day. There is no conceivable reason, therefore, why the ministers of the gospel should not preach precisely the same doctrines to every people, at this day, which Christ and the apostles preached in their day. But,

5. It appears from what has been said, that now is a proper time for ministers to feed their people with milk, and not with meat. Our churches and congregations, in general, are in a situation very similar to that of the Corinthians. Though they are increasing rapidly in human knowledge, yet they are declining fast in the knowledge of divine things, and need to be taught again and again, the first principles of the oracles of God. It is a gross mistake, that people are generally well indoctrinated in religious sentiments. The truth is, notwithstanding all their religious advantages, they are generally very ignorant of the peculiar and fundamental doctrines of Christianity. This may be partly owing to the negligence of private and public instructers, but perhaps more to the dissipation and licentiousness which are everywhere spreading and prevailing. How many are there in all our congregations, who know nothing but the name of the Christian religion, and need to be taught the plainest doctrines of it! Besides, the land is full of deceivers, who are zealously engaged to subvert every principle of morality and religion, and to propagate Atheism, Deism, and every species of infidelity. It is the age of blind reason and vain philosophy. These engines are industriously employed to corrupt the sentiments and hearts of old and young, and to lead them into strong and fatal delusions. It highly concerns the ministers of Christ, at this day, to make a bold and firm stand against ignorance, infidelity and vice. And the peculiar weapons of their warfare, are the pure, primary and essential doctrines of the gospel. These weapons have been mighty to destroy the strong holds of the enemies of truth. And there is abundant reason to believe that if the preachers of the gospel would unitedly employ these weapons in defence of it, they would effectually check the rapid progress of destructive errors, and revive the sinking cause of Christ. It is impossible for any man in the world to understand the gospel and yet disbelieve it. If ministers, therefore, would universally preach so as to make their people really understand the gospel, there would not be a single person who could become an infidel. It now depends,

Digitized by Google

under God, upon ministers, to save their people from the errors and destruction of this untoward generation, by feeding them with milk, and not with meat.

May these thoughts sink deeply into his heart, who is about to take the charge of the flock of Christ in this place.

Dear Sir, — If you have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, and have been fed with the sincere milk of the word, you will feed your people with knowledge and understanding. You will love to preach those precious truths to others, which you have found pleasing and profitable to yourself. You will believe that your people are able to bear the doctrines which are the best adapted to awaken and convince sinners, and to quicken, comfort, and edify saints. You will believe that your people ought to be satisfied if you feed them with the same doctrines with which the apostle fed the Corinthians. You will believe that if they do complain of such doctrines, you ought to regard God rather than man, and preach the truth, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. It is true, you will feel the propriety and importance of prudence in preaching; but your prudence will consist, not in concealing the doctrines of grace, but in holding them up in the clearest, strongest and most consistent light. The gospel carries its own evidence with it; and, if you represent its peculiar doctrines in their proper order, harmony and connection, they will approve themselves to every man's conscience. Though all men naturally hate the doctrines of the cross, yet their reason and conscience are always on the side of divine truth. Address these powers and faculties of the soul, before you attempt to move the passions. Rightly divide the word of truth, and give to every one his portion in due season. Always aim to instruct your people upon every subject which you handle in public. But if you would instruct them, you must instruct yourself. Give yourself to reading, meditation and prayer. Study the Bible and your own heart; and you will be able, through the whole course of your ministry, to bring forth out of your treasury things new as well as old. In a word, remember that you watch for souls as one who must give account, and if you are only faithful to God and to your people, you will be a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish.

Digitized by Google

Brethren and friends of this Church and Congregation,—Permit me to ask you on this solemn and interesting occasion, whether you are as well united in the gospel, as you are in the man whom you have called to preach it? Do you desire to be fed with "the sincere milk of the word?" Are you willing to receive the same precious truths which the primitive Christians gladly received from the lips of the apostle? If these are your desires and feelings, there is a promising prospect before you. Your pastor will preach with pleasure, and you will hear with no less pleasure and delight. The more he unfolds the gospel, the better you will be pleased with his preaching; and instead of becoming his enemies, because he tells you the truth, you will sincerely and ardently love him for his work's sake. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." If you only receive the truth in love, your peace and harmony will increase, and the union between you and your pastor will strengthen, and you will be happily preparing to be each other's "joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus." Amen.

Digitized by Google

# SERMON XII.

## PAUL'S METHOD OF PREACHING.

ORDINATION OF MR. STEPHEN CHAPIN, TO THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE CHURCH AND PEOPLE IN HILLSBOROUGH, N. H., JUNE 19, 1805.

---

**Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. — Acts 20: 21.**

As the apostle Paul was returning from Macedonia to Jerusalem, he came to Miletus, from whence he sent and called the elders of the church of Ephesus. When they had come together he delivered a discourse, which was directly calculated to assist and animate them in the work of the gospel ministry. And among other things he called their attention to his manner of preaching, while he formerly resided among them. "Ye know," says he, "how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." As these words were originally designed to administer instruction to the ministers of Christ, they naturally lead us, on the present occasion, to consider how the apostle Paul preached the gospel, and the propriety of his mode of preaching.

I. Let us consider how the apostle Paul preached the gospel. Though he sometimes preached to the Jews and sometimes to the Gentiles, and though he sometimes preached on one subject and sometimes on another, yet amidst all this variety, there



Digitized by Google

was a certain uniformity in his preaching which deserves particular notice.

1. He always made a point of explaining the gospel. To preach is to instruct; and to instruct on any subject, it is generally, if not always, necessary to explain it. Much of the force and perspicuity of preaching consists in explaining the gospel, and making men see the real design of God in the method he has taken to save sinful and perishing creatures. Here Jews and Gentiles, all men of all descriptions, stand in peculiar need of instruction. The apostle, therefore, determined to know nothing in his preaching save Jesus Christ and him crucified. He knew that it would be preposterous to call upon men to embrace the gospel before he had explained it to them in a clear and intelligible manner. And it appears from the whole history of his ministerial labors, that he excelled all the other apostles, in unfolding the meaning, the harmony, and the connection of the first principles of Christianity. Just as he was about to take his final leave of those whom he addressed in the text, he called upon them to bear testimony to his fidelity in explaining to them the gospel of divine grace. "And now behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." To declare all the counsel of God is to explain the great plan of redemption, which was concerted before the foundation of the world, and which comprises all the designs and operations of the Deity. Hence the apostle viewed it as a privilege, as well as a duty, to explain the gospel to all his hearers. In the third chapter of his epistle to the Ephesians he says, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to his eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." By this declaration it appears that the apostle meant to explain the gospel so

Digitized by Google

plainly and fully, that all his hearers might see God, and Christ, and angels, and saints, and sinners, and all created objects, in that relation and connection which they bear to each other in the work of redemption. Whether he preached to the Jews or to the Gentiles, to the learned or to the unlearned, he made it a primary object in his public discourses, to unfold the nature, design, and final consequences of the gospel, without the least ambiguity or reserve.

2. After he had explained the gospel to his hearers, he next taught them what it was to embrace it. "He testified both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Repentance and faith both flow from pure, disinterested love, but are exercised towards different objects. In repentance, the sinner fixes his eye and his heart upon God, whose character he has hated, whose law he has broken, and whose displeasure he has incurred. He loathes and abhors himself for all his transgressions, accepts the punishment of his iniquity, and cordially approves of that justice which condemns him. In faith, the sinner fixes his eye and his heart upon the Lord Jesus Christ, and loves him for loving righteousness and hating iniquity; for condemning sin in the flesh; and for doing that which renders it consistent with all the perfections of God to pardon and save the penitent. This saving faith naturally follows repentance, but can never go before it; because love to Christ necessarily presupposes self-abasement and self-abhorrence for sin. Accordingly the apostle, after the example of Christ, places repentance before faith. This is the natural order of these two gracious affections, and they are always exercised in this order, by all who cordially embrace the gospel. And since he knew that none could derive any saving benefit from the gospel without complying with the terms of life, he did for this reason describe those gracious exercises of heart which are the essence of repentance and faith, and which are absolutely necessary to obtain pardon and acceptance with God, through the atonement of Christ.

3. The apostle made it his universal practice in preaching, not only to explain the gospel to his hearers, and teach them what it was to comply with it, but urged them to repent and believe immediately. He says in the text, that he testified

Digitized by Google

"both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." As soon as he had taught sinners the nature, design, and terms of the gospel, he exhorted them to embrace it without the least delay. He concluded his discourse to the stupid and ignorant Athenians, with a solemn exhortation to repentance. He told them that God had winked at their former ignorance, but now commanded them to repent immediately. To the Corinthians he said, "Now then we are embassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." He held the same imperative language to the Ephesians. In addressing the sinner he said, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." The apostle Paul not only instructed, but exhorted his hearers. He addressed not only the understandings, but the consciences of sinners. He always meant to fasten upon their minds a sense of their immediate obligation to renounce their enmity to God, and become reconciled to him upon the terms of the gospel. Though he very well knew the moral weakness and impotence of sinners, arising from the native depravity of their hearts, yet he solemnly testified that it was their immediate and indispensable duty to exercise repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. This was his constant, uniform practice in preaching the gospel to those who were dead in trespasses and sins.

Let us now consider,

II. The propriety of the apostle's urging sinners to embrace the gospel immediately. He undoubtedly saw the propriety of this mode of preaching, and perhaps we shall all see the propriety of it, if we candidly and impartially attend to what may be offered in favor of his exhorting the impenitent and unbelieving to an immediate compliance with the gospel.

1. There was a propriety in the apostle's mode of preaching, because sinners are capable of embracing the gospel as soon as they understand it. They possess all the powers and faculties which are necessary to constitute them free, moral agents. They are capable of knowing God and hating him, and of knowing Christ and hating him. Hence says our Saviour to the unbelieving Jews, "Ye have both seen and hated both me and my Father." Though the moral depravity of sinners has weak-

Digitized by Google

ened their intellectual powers, yet it has by no means destroyed them. All their moral corruption lies in the heart, and consists in loving themselves supremely; and though this selfishness disposes them to say unto God, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways," yet when their attention is awakened, they are capable of seeing the perfections of God displayed in his works, and of understanding his will revealed in his word. They have, therefore, precisely the same natural capacity to embrace the gospel as to understand it. And upon this ground the apostle did, with great propriety, testify "both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Though Jews and Gentiles were all under sin, yet they were all capable of loving God and believing in Christ, as soon as the apostle had explained the gospel, and plainly taught them the terms of salvation. At the same moment that he conveyed the true knowledge of the gospel to their understanding, they felt a conviction in their own minds of the propriety of his exhorting them to believe it immediately. This warranted him to say, that by manifestation of the truth, he had commended himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. The bare knowledge of truth always creates an immediate obligation to feel and act agreeably to it. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." All men act upon this principle in their common conduct. The legislator first instructs, and then commands the subject. The officer first instructs, and then commands the soldier. The parent first instructs, and then commands the child. The master first instructs, and then commands the servant. After any person has instructed another in duty, there is a propriety in his exhorting him to an immediate compliance. This holds in regard to religious instruction, as well as to any other. There was, therefore, a plain propriety in the apostle's calling upon all to whom he preached the truth, to receive it in love immediately.

2. Paul preached agreeably to the directions which Christ had, from time to time, given to his ministers. Mark tells us that when Christ called the twelve apostles, and sent them forth by two and two to preach the gospel, he said unto them, "In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. And whosoever shall not receive you,



Digitized by Google

nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet, for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city. And they went out, and preached that men should repent." By this commission Christ authorized the twelve apostles to call upon sinners to repent and believe the gospel the very first time they heard it, upon pain of their future and aggravated destruction. Soon after this, Christ gave a commission, of precisely the same import, to seventy more, whom he sent forth to preach the gospel in his name. And just before his ascension to heaven, he gave a general commission to his apostles and to all their successors in the gospel ministry to the end of time, in these memorable words: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." These repeated directions of the great Head of the church laid the apostle under indispensable obligation to testify both to the Jews and Gentiles, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. It was a part of his ministerial duty, to urge sinners to give an immediate and cordial reception to the gospel, which he preached by divine authority. He would have been unfaithful to Christ and to the souls of men, if he had neglected to warn sinners to flee immediately from the wrath to come, and lay hold on eternal life. He had no warrant from Christ to preach the gospel, without inculcating the immediate duty of repentance and faith. There is no more room, therefore, to call in question the propriety of his mode of preaching, than to call in question the propriety of his obeying that divine authority by which he preached.

3. The example of all the sacred instructers who went before the apostle Paul, illustrates and confirms the propriety of his mode of preaching. He addressed sinners in the same manner in which the ancient prophets addressed them. They called upon the disobedient and rebellious to repent and return to God immediately. Let us attentively consider their mode of addressing sinners.

Isaiah, the evangelical prophet, having, in the first chapter of his prophecy, described the ingratitude and stupidity of the openly vicious and profligate, exhorts them to immediate re-

Digitized by Google

pentance and reformation. "Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well." Similar to this is his exhortation in the fifty-fifth chapter. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

The prophet Jeremiah was commanded to address the backsliders in Israel in this pointed language, "Return, ye backsliding children, saith the Lord." "Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns. Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart." Here sinners are solemnly exhorted to change their hearts, and return to God immediately.

The prophet Ezekiel exhorted those who were pining away in their iniquity, to change their hearts as well as their lives, as the only way to escape eternal death. "Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?"

The prophet Joel called upon sinners in a time of danger and distress, to return unto the Lord with all their hearts, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and to rend their hearts and not their garments.

John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ and the greatest of all the prophets, urged sinners to repent immediately, and believe in him who was to come. We read, "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."

Our Saviour, who soon succeeded his forerunner as a preacher, exhorted sinners, as one having authority, to repent and believe the gospel immediately. This appears from the account which Mark gives of his public ministry. "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled,

Digitized by Google

and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel." This was his usual mode of addressing sinners in his public and private discourses. As "he was walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea — And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men, and they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship, and their father, and followed him." He required all whom he called to follow him, to obey his call without the least delay. When one begged time to go and bury his father, he gave him this short negative answer: "Let the dead bury their dead." And when another desired leave to bid his friends farewell, he refused to grant his request. In his sermon on the mount, he exhorted sinners to change their hearts, and immediately become holy and benevolent as their Father in heaven. And he severely condemned the Scribes and Pharisees, who taught a different doctrine. "Wo unto you! — for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, — ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee! cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also."

Such was Christ's mode of preaching; which his first apostles uniformly followed. While Peter was preaching to the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, "they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter gave them the only proper direction in their solemn situation. "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." The next public discourse which he delivered to the people who saw him cure the lame man at the gate of the temple, he concluded with this exhortation: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." And when he saw Simon the sorcerer in the

Digitized by Google

gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, he paid no regard to his moral impotence, but with great solemnity, said, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps," or rather, so that, "the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." James, another apostle, followed the example and direction of Christ, in preaching the gospel to sinners, and urged them to immediate repentance, humiliation and submission. "Submit yourselves to God." "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."

We have now said enough, and perhaps more than enough, to convince every candid mind that the prophets, John the Baptist, Christ, and his first apostles, preached to sinners in precisely the same manner; and uniformly exhorted them to immediate repentance and reconciliation to God. The plain and natural conclusion is, that there was a perfect propriety in the apostle Paul's mode of preaching. He stands completely justified by the voice of reason, by the best examples, and by the highest authority, in "testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

This subject now suggests some things of serious importance to those who preach, and to those who hear the gospel.

1. If there was a propriety in the apostle's mode of preaching, then all his successors in the ministry should follow his example, in explaining the gospel as clearly as possible to their hearers. He did not preach merely about the gospel, or merely agreeably to the gospel; but he preached the gospel itself. He laid open the gospel scheme of salvation, in all its branches, from its first rise in the divine mind to its final consummation. He shunned not to declare all the counsel of God, but took every opportunity in public and private, to teach the Jews and Gentiles the essential doctrines of the gospel, in the most plain and profitable manner. He supposed that the Jews, notwithstanding they had the oracles of God in their hands, stood in need of being instructed in the knowledge of the gospel, as well as the Gentiles who had been destitute of divine revelation. And



Digitized by Google

viewing all his hearers in this light, he meant to explain the gospel so plainly and fully, that both the learned and unlearned might understand it. In this important part of preaching, he has set an example which is still worthy of universal imitation. But ministers, at this day, are extremely apt to imagine that their hearers are sufficiently acquainted with the peculiar doctrines of the gospel; and, for this reason often neglect to explain them. This is a very great defect in the present mode of preaching, and a very great departure from the apostolic practice. The deplorable consequence is, that multitudes, in a gospel land, live and die totally unacquainted with the first principles of the oracles of God. It is not enough for the professed ministers of Christ and successors of the apostle to preach merely about the gospel, and about its leading sentiments, and only inculcate some of its moral duties; they ought to spend more time, and take more care to preach the pure gospel itself, and make men understand it, in its true import and extensive meaning.

2. If there was a propriety in the apostle's exhorting sinners to embrace the gospel immediately; then the gospel itself is perfectly consistent with his mode of preaching. The apostle had a clear and comprehensive knowledge of the gospel, and was able to explain all its doctrines according to truth. He could not have declared all the counsel of God, unless he had really understood the whole scheme of redemption. But he did declare all the counsel of God; and after he had explained the great and fundamental doctrines of the gospel, he urged both Jews and Gentiles to embrace them immediately with all their hearts. He saw, and he made sinners see, that all the doctrines of the gospel were entirely consistent with his urging them to repent and believe immediately.

In particular, he saw that the true doctrine concerning the extent of Christ's atonement, was consistent with his mode of preaching. Some have supposed that Christ did not make atonement for all mankind, but only for the elect; and, upon this ground, have supposed there is no propriety in calling upon sinners in general to embrace the gospel. It is true, this inference fairly follows from the false notion of particular redemption. But the apostle, who better understood the extent of Christ's atonement, represented it as extending to the whole

Digitized by Google

human race. He taught that Christ "tasted death for every man." He taught that he died for all, "that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." He taught that he died for some who shall finally perish. In a word, he believed and taught the universal extent of Christ's atonement for sinners; and in this view of it, he saw it to be consistent with his calling upon all men everywhere to repent and believe the gospel, upon the very first offer of salvation.

He further saw that the true doctrine concerning the total depravity of sinners, was consistent with his mode of preaching. Some suppose that total depravity consists in the mere want of a good taste, or a good disposition, or a holy principle. And some suppose that total depravity consists in a positive bad taste, or bad disposition, or sinful principle. But whether it consists in a want of a good principle, or in a positive bad principle, they suppose that while sinners are really under the dominion of total depravity, there is no propriety in calling upon them to repent and believe the gospel, because they are under a natural inability to exercise repentance and faith. Here it must be allowed, that if the total depravity of sinners does not consist either in the want of a good principle, or in a positive bad principle, they are really under a natural inability to repent and believe the gospel; and, so long as this natural inability remains, there is no propriety at all in urging them to exercise repentance, or faith, or love, or any other gracious affection. But the apostle had a very different idea of the moral depravity of sinners. He supposed it consisted neither in a want of a good principle, nor in a positive bad principle; but altogether in free, voluntary exercises of self-love. Accordingly, he represented them as being "lovers of their own selves," and as having a carnal mind, which was enmity against God. And in this view of the total depravity of sinners, he saw a perfect propriety in calling upon them to hate sin, to love holiness, and heartily embrace the gospel.

Add to this, he saw that the true doctrine concerning regeneration, was consistent with his mode of preaching. All men form their idea of regeneration according to their idea of total depravity. Those who suppose that total depravity consists either in a want of a good principle, or in a positive bad principle, of consequence suppose that regeneration consists in the

Digitized by Google

implantation of a new holy principle, in which the subject is wholly passive. They consider regeneration as a physical rather than a moral change; and suppose that when sinners are regenerated by the divine Spirit, they have a new holy principle given them, which is prior to, and the foundation of, all their future exercises of holiness. Hence they naturally conclude that sinners are totally passive in regeneration; and that previously to their receiving a new principle of holiness, they are under the same kind of inability to exercise any holy affection, that a blind man is to see, or a deaf man to hear, or a dead man to move. And upon this ground, they deny the propriety of urging sinners to immediate repentance and faith. But though the apostle believed the total depravity of sinners, and the special influence of the Spirit in changing their hearts, yet he had no idea that they were passive in regeneration, or that this saving change consisted in the implantation of a holy or gracious principle. He represented God as renewing sinners, by shedding abroad his love in their hearts; or by working in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure. He represented the fruit of the Spirit to be love, not the principle of love; to be joy, not the principle of joy; to be faith, not the principle of faith. He represented sinners to be active, and not passive, while under the renewing, as well as sanctifying influence of the divine Spirit. Hence he clearly discerned the propriety of his urging sinners to awake and arise from spiritual death, to put off the old man and put on the new, and immediately walk in newness of life.

Now, if neither the true doctrine concerning the extent of Christ's atonement, nor the true doctrine concerning total depravity, nor the true doctrine concerning regeneration, was inconsistent with the apostle's mode of preaching; can we conceive of any other true doctrine of the gospel, that is inconsistent with urging sinners to repent and believe immediately? The propriety of the apostle's mode of preaching demonstrates that there is not a single doctrine concerning God, or concerning Christ, or concerning the divine Spirit, or concerning the human heart, that is contained in the gospel of Christ, which is inconsistent with exhorting sinners to embrace the Saviour as soon as they know his character.

3. If there was a propriety in the apostle's urging sinners to

Digitized by Google

embrace the gospel immediately, then all his successors in the ministry ought to follow his example in this important respect. No good reason can be assigned for departing from the apostolic mode of preaching. Paul derived his authority to preach the gospel, from the commission of Christ; and his successors derive their authority to preach the gospel from the same commission. Paul preached the gospel, to those who were dead in trespasses and sins; and his successors have to preach it to persons of the same character. Paul preached the gospel agreeably to the example of the prophets, of John the Baptist, of Christ, and of the other apostles who had gone before him in the ministry; and his successors are bound to follow the example of the same inspired preachers. All the ministers of the gospel, therefore, are under every possible obligation to adhere strictly to the apostolic mode of preaching. If they search the Scriptures through, if they examine human nature ever so much, and if they compare all the doctrines of the gospel together, they cannot discover a single reason why they should deviate from the practice of the prophets, of Christ, and of the apostles. All these preachers urged sinners to turn from sin to holiness, to repent of all their transgressions, and immediately become reconciled to God in the way he has appointed. And this is still the only proper way of preaching the gospel to sinners; who are capable of understanding and embracing it, notwithstanding their total opposition to the terms of life. It is easy for ministers to preach the gospel to sinners, while they follow the apostle's mode of preaching; but as soon as they depart from it, they find themselves plunged in darkness and difficulty. They know not what to say to the enemies of God, while they neglect to urge them to become reconciled to him. They feel the absurdity of exhorting them to remain impenitent, unbelieving and rebellious; but they must do this, either directly or indirectly, while they neglect to urge them to embrace the gospel. Hence arises the question which is so much agitated at this day among the preachers of the gospel, What must they say to sinners — what duties must they urge upon them — what directions must they give them? Few ministers find any difficulty in preaching to saints, who love God and cordially embrace the gospel; but many seem to be at a loss how to preach to sinners, who hate God and every duty which he has required in his word.

Digitized by Google

But if they would adopt the apostolic mode of preaching, they would find it as easy to preach to sinners as to saints. Paul knew how to preach to sinners of all characters and conditions. He testified to them "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." And let his successors in the ministry only follow his example, and all their difficulties and disputes about the proper mode of addressing sinners will entirely cease.

4. If there was a propriety in the apostle's mode of preaching, then there is no propriety in blaming ministers for conforming to it. They ought to take him for their guide in preaching, and endeavor to explain and enforce the gospel in the same manner that he did. But those who hate God are always disposed to complain of his ambassadors for calling upon them to love him. For this, they complained of the prophets. For this, they complained of John the Baptist. For this, they complained of Christ. And for this, they often complained of the apostles. Many became enemies to Paul, for calling upon them to repent and believe the gospel. Nor has the offence of the cross yet ceased. People in general are still disposed to complain of ministers for preaching exactly as the apostle preached; that is, for urging them to repent and believe the gospel immediately. They wish to be indulged in the neglect of this duty; and to be directed to something which they can do, while they retain all the depravity of their hearts. If ministers will depart from the apostolic mode of preaching, and inculcate only morality, and the mere external duties of reading and praying, seeking and striving, they will highly applaud them. But if ministers plainly testify repentance toward God, and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, and condemn all the doings of sinners previously to their turning from sin to holiness, multitudes will murmur and complain of them, and absurdly say, that they urge no duty upon sinners. Many seem to imagine that if sinners are exhorted to no duty previously to embracing the gospel, they are exhorted to no duty at all; and, upon this ground, they complain of those preachers who do not exhort sinners to any duty prior to repentance and faith. But they ought to consider that, by blaming such preachers, they reproach the prophets, Christ, and all the apostles; who exhorted sinners to nothing short of true repentance and a cordial reconciliation to God, upon the terms of the

Digitized by Google

gospel. Let people only read the commission which Christ gave to his ministers, and examine the practice of all the inspired teachers, and they will find themselves fighting against the whole Bible, while they are condemning ministers for obeying the authority of Christ, and following the example of all the teachers immediately sent from God. But,

5. It clearly appears from all that has been said in this discourse, that ministers are justly to be blamed, if they neglect to follow the apostolic mode of preaching. This neglect must be owing either to a misunderstanding of the gospel, or to a desire to please man rather than Christ. Some may undoubtedly neglect to urge sinners to an immediate compliance with the gospel, because they really believe that sinners are totally unable to receive the truth in love. But this must be owing to their misunderstanding the gospel, which they mean to preach. If they really understood the gospel as the apostle Paul understood it, they would see it to be entirely consistent with their urging sinners to embrace it immediately, upon pain of everlasting destruction. They would see the propriety of preaching to sinners, as Christ directed all his ministers to preach, in his last commission to them. And they would not hesitate to say to every sinner, after they had explained the gospel to him, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." But if any are so ignorant of the gospel as not to see the propriety of preaching it in this manner they are certainly to be blamed for not properly searching and understanding the Scriptures, which clearly reveal the gospel of the grace of God. Though their ignorance may extenuate, yet it cannot extinguish their criminality in neglecting to exhort sinners to do their first and most important duty.

But there is no excuse for those who understand the gospel, and yet neglect to urge sinners to an immediate compliance with it. They can have no other motive for their neglect, but to avoid the censure and secure the applause of their hearers. They choose to please men, rather than to be the servants of Christ. It is absolutely certain, however, that they will finally fail of obtaining their end. For God will blame them, Christ will blame them, the prophets and apostles will blame them, awakened sinners will blame them, and their own consciences will condemn them, for their criminal neglect.

Digitized by Google

Their criminality will be in some proportion to the fatal tendency of their anti-scriptural and anti-apostolical mode of preaching. It is calculated to justify, stupefy and destroy sinners. The neglecting to urge sinners to repent and believe immediately, is practically saying that they have a right, in the sight of God, to remain impenitent and unbelieving. It is really justifying them in all their selfishness of heart, and total opposition to the whole scheme of redemption. And to justify them in their state of alienation from God is to stupefy and harden their hearts, and make them feel safe, while they are every day exposed to be cut down in their sins, and put beyond the reach of divine mercy. There is nothing more hardening and destructive to sinners, than accommodating the gospel itself to their corrupt hearts. The preaching that does this, is far more dangerous than no preaching at all. It is directly calculated to justify, stupefy and destroy precious and immortal souls. The true design of preaching the gospel to sinners, is, to make them realize their guilt, their danger, and their duty. But neglecting to urge them to immediate repentance and faith, directly tends to stifle all sense of guilt, of danger, and of duty, in their minds; and make them settle down on their lees, and say in their hearts, "The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil." Thousands are at this day, undoubtedly, experiencing those stupefying effects of unfaithful preaching. How aggravated then must be the guilt of those ministers, who knowingly disobey the authority of Christ, disregard his example, and pervert his gospel to the eternal destruction of the precious souls, for whom he suffered and died on the cross!

The discourse now turns to the Pastor elect, for whom it is more especially designed.

You are, my young friend, about to enter upon the work of the gospel ministry, which will be highly interesting both to yourself and to those committed to your pastoral charge. It will be one principal branch of your ministerial duty, to preach the gospel to sinners. And you ought to esteem it a peculiar favor, that so many prophets and apostles, as well as Christ himself, have gone before you, and set you a perfect example of evangelical preaching. If you neglect to follow these infallible guides, it must be owing entirely to your seeking to please men rather than God. To this powerful temptation you will

Digitized by Google

most certainly be exposed. It is a day of deep declension, in which the true apostolic mode of preaching the gospel has become, in many places, very unfashionable and very unpopular.

If you preach the same truths that Paul preached, and urge them in the same manner, you may expect that they will awaken the displeasure, if not the opposition of some of your hearers. It concerns you, to gird up the loins of your mind, and sincerely resolve to testify repentance toward God, and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, in all your public discourses. And here, perhaps, you will keep your resolution. But you will have occasion to preach to sinners in private, and from house to house. And here your resolution will be put to a severer trial. You will be in peculiar danger of departing from the apostle's example, and of contracting your public discourses, by directing awakened sinners to do something short of immediate repentance and faith. They will tell you that they cannot change their own hearts, that faith is the gift of God, that it is absurd to require them to repent and believe immediately. They will anxiously desire you to lower the terms of the gospel to their impotence, and tell them what to do in order to get a new heart, and become true penitents. To answer their questions, and to silence their objections against an immediate compliance with the gospel, will require the exercise of all your wisdom and integrity. But you will always bear it in mind, that you have the Bible and their own consciences on the side of truth, and nothing to combat but their selfish and partial feelings. Be not afraid, therefore, to tell them the truth, and the whole truth, respecting the gospel and the plague of their own hearts. Show them that all their excuses for impenitence and unbelief flow from enmity to God, and reflect dishonour upon his character and all his overtures of mercy. Though this mode of treating them may make them like the young man in the gospel, go away sorrowful, yet if ever they become reconciled to God, they will thank you for your plainness and fidelity. Never give any directions to sinners which they may comply with, and yet remain impenitent; but so preach to them in public, and so converse with them in private, that if they understand and love your instructions they shall certainly be saved. Be a faithful minister of Christ, and you may depend upon his promised presence and assist-



Digitized by Google

ance, which will enable you to perform every ministerial duty, and endure every ministerial trial. "Take heed unto yourself, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost may make you an overseer, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Declare unto your people all the counsel of God, with a tender and compassionate concern for their future and everlasting good; and then you may, in the close of your ministry, whether it shall be longer or shorter, call upon them to testify this consoling truth in your favor, that you are "pure from the blood of all men." May you and your people prepare for such a happy parting, that you may have a more joyful meeting beyond the grave, and be each other's joy and crown of rejoicing in the kingdom of glory. Amen.

Digitized by Google

# SERMON XIII.

## CONFIRMATION IN THE DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL AN EFFECT OF DIVINE GRACE.

INSTALLATION OF REV. HOLLAND WEEKS, ABINGTON, AUGUST 9, 1815.

---

**Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace.—Hebrews 13: 9.**

THE primitive professors of Christianity were surrounded by enemies, who wished to draw them into their own fatal errors and delusions. The Jewish Scribes and Pharisees, and the Pagan priests and philosophers, were all hostile to the doctrines of the gospel, and employed their learning and subtilty, to subvert these doctrines, and to propagate their own. The apostles, therefore, frequently wrote to those who had professed to embrace Christianity, to guard them against their erroneous enemies, who lay in wait to deceive and to destroy. Paul seldom fails in any of his epistles, to inculcate upon Christians the duty and importance of keeping the faith and avoiding error. In the fifth chapter of this epistle, he reproves the Hebrews for neglecting to preserve the knowledge which they once had, of the great truths of the gospel. "When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." They had lost instead of gaining religious knowledge; which exposed them to be led astray by those who endeavored to overthrow their faith in the gospel. To secure them against this danger, he



Digitized by Google

first exhorts them to remember the faith and example of their deceased teachers, who had spoken unto them the word of God; and then charges them, "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace." His obvious meaning is, that grace in their hearts would preserve them from fatal errors, and effectually establish them in the essential doctrines of the gospel. The spirit of the text may be expressed in this general observation:

That the subjects of grace are established in the essential doctrines of the gospel.

I shall endeavor to show,

I. Who are the subjects of grace.

II. What are the essential doctrines of the gospel. And,

III. That the subjects of grace are established in these doctrines.

I. We are to consider who are the subjects of grace.

All men are naturally destitute of grace, and under the entire dominion of a depraved heart. In this state they remain, until they are awakened, convinced, and converted, by the special influences of the divine Spirit. He makes them sensible of their moral corruption, sets their sins in order before them, causes them to realize their just desert of eternal destruction, and then sheds abroad the love of God in their hearts, and turns them from sin to holiness. They now become conformed to the moral image of God, reconciled to his character, to his laws, to his designs, and to the terms of salvation proposed in the gospel. Their internal views and affections are essentially changed. Old things are passed away, and all things are become new. They have a spiritual discerning of spiritual things, and love holiness in God, and in their fellow creatures. They place God on the throne, and take their proper place at his footstool. They renounce their self-righteousness and self-dependence, and rely alone upon Christ for pardoning mercy, and choose to be saved through the grace of the gospel. Their selfish heart which darkened their understanding, is removed, and a pure, benevolent heart is given them, by which they discern and love the glory of God, as it is illustriously displayed in the work of redemption. This pure and holy love reigns in the hearts of all the subjects of grace, and distinguishes

Digitized by Google

them from the impenitent, unbelieving world, who are dead in trespasses and sins.

II. Let us next consider what are the essential doctrines of the gospel.

All Christians are agreed that the gospel contains some essential doctrines; though they are not so well agreed in drawing the line of distinction between those doctrines which are essential and those which are not essential. Some doctrines may be called essential, because they constitute the essence of the gospel, and are necessary to its very existence; and some may be called essential, because they must be believed and embraced, in order to salvation. It is pretty easy to determine what doctrines are essential to the existence of the gospel, and lie at the foundation of it. There are some doctrines so essential to the gospel, that if any one of them should be denied, the denial would, in its just consequences, subvert the whole plan of salvation through a Redeemer. If God had not decreed to save any of mankind, it would necessarily follow that none of mankind would be saved. If God had not decreed that a part of mankind should be saved, it would necessarily follow that a part of mankind would not be saved. If God had not decreed that his Son, the second person in the Trinity, should die to make atonement for mankind, it would necessarily follow that none of mankind would be saved through the atonement of Christ. If God had not decreed to send his Spirit to begin and carry on a work of grace in any of mankind, it would necessarily follow that none of mankind would be saved. If God had not decreed that any of mankind should become sinners, it would necessarily follow that none of mankind would need a Saviour, or could be saved through the gospel. It is now easy to see that the doctrine of moral depravity, the doctrine of regeneration, the doctrine of saints' perseverance, the doctrine of the atonement, the doctrine of the Trinity, the doctrine of election, and the general doctrine of the decrees, are all absolutely essential to the gospel, and must be maintained, in order to maintain the gospel itself. For if any man can fairly disprove any one of these doctrines, he may by fair reasoning disprove all the rest. But though all these doctrines are equally fundamental to the gospel, yet they may not all be equally essential to salvation. For many persons may not



Digitized by Google

understand all these doctrines, nor discern their inseparable connection, but yet may understand, believe, and love some of them, while they are ignorant of others; and this ignorance may be consistent with their final salvation. It is not, however, to my present purpose to say what doctrines a man must believe in order to be saved, but only to point out what are fundamental to the gospel, and necessary to its very existence; for it is to these doctrines that the apostle refers, in the verse which contains the text. "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein." There was a serious question among the Jews who were converted to Christianity, whether they might, or might not, lawfully eat those things which were prohibited by the ceremonial law. This the apostle determines to be a non-essential point; and exhorts believers not to break charity with one another on account of such things as were neither fundamental to the gospel, nor essential to salvation. But he recommends it as a good thing, by which he means an important thing, that Christians should be established in those doctrines which are essential to the gospel, and which cannot be denied and rejected, without denying and rejecting the gospel itself.

III. Having specified the essential doctrines of the gospel, it remains to show that real Christians, who are the subjects of grace, are actually established in them. The apostle represents them so established, as not to be carried about by divers and strange doctrines; and this we find verified by the conduct of real saints under both the Old and New Testament. Moses was a subject of grace, and he kept the faith in the court of Pharaoh, where he was surrounded by idolaters and the most artful deceivers. When religion was at the lowest ebb in Israel, there were seven thousand men of grace, who kept the faith and refused to bow the knee to the image of Baal. All the pious men in Judah kept the faith, while the ten tribes of Israel fell away, under the seduction of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego kept the faith, amidst all the threats and machinations of the enemies of truth to corrupt and destroy them. When many of Christ's professed followers went back. and walked no more with him. "Jesus said unto the

Digitized by Google

twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Thus the apostles were established in the faith before Christ's death; and afterwards we find that not only Stephen the first martyr, and James the second, but all the rest of the apostles, except Judas the apostate, sealed their faith by their blood. And it is well known that since their day, multitudes have sacrificed their lives in testimony of the truth and importance of the essential doctrines of the gospel. All Christian martyrs might have saved their lives, if they would have only renounced the essential truths of the gospel, and embraced divers and strange doctrines. Why then did they not renounce their peculiar religious sentiments, and embrace those which would have saved their lives? No other sufficient reason can be given, but that their hearts were established with grace. These instances afford a strong presumption that good men are really established in the essential doctrines of revealed religion. And this leads me to say that they not only may be, but must be so established; for several reasons:

1. Because they know that the essential doctrines of the gospel are true. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things." The subjects of grace have a peculiar, certain knowledge of the essential doctrines of grace, which establishes them in the faith. All the essential doctrines of the gospel are doctrines of grace. The whole scheme of salvation was devised on purpose to display the riches of divine grace in the salvation of sinners. It was grace in God to decree to save any of our fallen race. It was grace in God to decree to send his Son into the world, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. It was grace in God to send his Holy Spirit to renew and sanctify the elect, and form them vessels of mercy, and fit them for the kingdom of glory. These doctrines of grace the subjects of grace know to be true, by their own experience. They have seen their own wretchedness and guilt, and felt their need of that salvation which the gospel offers. They have been partakers of the divine nature, and possess the very same spirit of benevolence which

Digitized by Google

moved God to provide a way of salvation exactly suited to their case. They know therefore, that the doctrines of grace are true, by the effects which they have produced in their own hearts. Hence says the apostle John, "He that believeth in the Son of God, hath the witness in himself." And again he says to Christians, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth." Christ himself said, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." All the subjects of grace, "have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that they may know the things that are freely given to them of God." According to these declarations of Scripture, all Christians, or subjects of grace, not only think, but know experimentally and certainly, that the essential doctrines of the gospel are true; and this knowledge must establish them in the truth. When men know any thing to be true, they cannot divest themselves of that knowledge at their pleasure, but are morally obliged to retain it. So when the subjects of grace know that the first and fundamental doctrines of the gospel are true, they must necessarily be confirmed and established in them.

2. They must be established in these doctrines, not only because they know them to be true, but because they love them. All the subjects of grace sincerely believe the gospel; and their sincere belief of the gospel flows from love to those truths which compose the gospel, and which are its essential doctrines. We read, "Faith works by love;" and "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." Saving faith essentially consists in believing and loving the great and fundamental doctrines of the gospel. All the subjects of grace are true believers; and therefore it is essential to their character, that they love the gospel, and all the truths which they believe to be essential to it. Now if they not only know the essential doctrines of Christianity to be true, but also love these doctrines, then they must be established in them. The mere knowledge of the essential doctrines of the gospel will not infallibly establish men in them, unless they love them. Paul exhorts Timothy to hold faith and a good conscience; "which," says he, "some having put away,

Digitized by Google

concerning faith have made shipwreck; of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." And Peter, speaking of false teachers who privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, observes, "It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." Hymeneus and Alexander, and other heretics, once knew the way of righteousness; but being destitute of grace, they hated the essential doctrines of the gospel; and, therefore, in direct contrariety to the dictates of their reason and conscience, renounced the Divinity of Christ and other essential doctrines of the gospel, and so made shipwreck of their faith and good conscience. But this is never true of the subjects of grace, or real Christians, who love, as well as know the great and essential doctrines of the gospel. Those who both know and love the truth, never will renounce it. They are established, and cannot be carried about with divers and strange doctrines. Agreeably to this, the apostle prays for the Ephesians, that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith; that being rooted and grounded in love, they might be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fulness of God. And that they might "be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." The meaning of the apostle here is too plain to be misunderstood. He asserts that all saints, all the subjects of grace, are so filled with the fulness of God, so rooted and grounded in love to the essential doctrines of the gospel, that they cannot be tossed to and fro, nor carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the most artful deceivers. They are effectually established in the truth. I may add,

3. That the subjects of grace are established in the essential doctrines of the gospel, because they not only know and love them, but feel the infinite importance of them. They sensibly realize that the whole weight of their salvation depends upon their holding fast the form of sound words, and maintaining the great truths upon which they have founded all their future and

Digitized by Google

eternal hopes. Paul had such a deep sense of the importance of the essential doctrines of the gospel, which he believed, and loved, and preached to others. Hear how feelingly he speaks to Timothy upon this interesting subject. "Be not thou ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel; whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." The gospel is the only possible way of salvation for guilty and perishing creatures. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." All the subjects of grace see and feel that their eternal interests are suspended upon their believing and loving the essential doctrines of the gospel; and therefore they can no more be moved to disbelieve, deny and give up these doctrines, than they can be moved to give up the salvation of their souls. They can adopt the language of the apostle: "We know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things

Digitized by Google

we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Thus those who love God, who love the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God and second person in the Trinity; and who love the doctrine of the divine decrees, the doctrine of election, the doctrine of regeneration, the doctrine of justification through the atonement of Christ, and the doctrine of the final perseverance of the saints; are immovably established in these essential doctrines of the gospel, and cannot be carried about with divers and strange doctrines, either by the great deceiver, or any of his instruments, who lie in wait to deceive. I now proceed to improve the subject, by pointing out several important truths which seem naturally to flow from it.

1. If the subjects of grace are established in the essential doctrines of the gospel, then it is easy to distinguish religious orthodoxy from religious heterodoxy. Many, at this day, presume to condemn and ridicule both these terms as insignificant and unintelligible. But if there be any essential doctrines of the gospel, in which all real Christians are united and established, then orthodoxy consists in believing and maintaining these essential doctrines of the gospel; and heterodoxy consists in disbelieving, denying and opposing these same doctrines. Orthodoxy and heterodoxy are terms full of important meaning, which real Christians can easily understand and distinguish. They know what it is to believe and profess the essential doctrines of the gospel, and what it is to disbelieve and deny these doctrines; they can, therefore, easily distinguish those who are orthodox from those who are heterodox. Orthodoxy and heterodoxy are terms which have been used in the Christian church for more than eighteen hundred years. Those Christians who have been established in the essential doctrines of the gospel, have called themselves orthodox, and called others, who denied and opposed these doctrines, heterodox. And though the heterodox have disliked this distinction, and left no methods unemployed to explode it, yet the distinction, and the terms which mark it, are still known and kept up, through the Christian world. To deny that there is any such thing as orthodoxy,

Digitized by Google

in distinction from heterodoxy, is to deny that there are any essential doctrines of the gospel, in distinction from non-essential ones; which is virtually to deny the gospel itself. There is no real difference between a heretic and an infidel. The infidel disbelieves and denies the divine inspiration of the gospel; and the heretic disbelieves and denies the essential doctrines of the gospel; which subverts it to all intents and purposes. We seldom hear any but unbelievers and heretics condemn and ridicule the words orthodoxy and heterodoxy; for those who know and love the essential doctrines of the gospel, realize the solemn importance of the distinction denoted by these terms.

2. If the subjects of grace are established in the essential doctrines of the gospel, then real Christians see the propriety and importance of forming and subscribing creeds, or confessions of faith. They know that there are essential doctrines of the gospel; they know that these doctrines can be ascertained and defined; and they know that, when they are ascertained and defined, and thrown into the form of a creed, they are the only proper text of orthodoxy. They know that the Bible is no proper test of men's religious sentiments; for men may profess to believe the Bible, while they disbelieve, deny and oppose all the essential doctrines contained in it. Hence they see the propriety and importance of a more definite criterion of orthodoxy. They wish to know whether those with whom they join in Christian communion, are really united with them in the belief of the great and fundamental doctrines of Christianity, upon which they build all their own hopes of salvation. They cannot see how a gospel church can be formed upon a consistent and permanent foundation, unless they adopt some form of sound words, and bind themselves to abide by it. This has been the general opinion of orthodox Christians ever since the primitive days of Christianity; and they have carried their opinion into practice. They have made use of formulas, creeds, and confessions of faith, to distinguish themselves not only from Pagans, Jews, and Infidels, but from all corrupt sectarians or heretics. Creeds have not been the means of making infidels and heretics, but only the means of preserving the pure part of the Christian church from their contagious and destructive influence. Those who are established in the essential doctrines of the gospel, are not ashamed to profess them

Digitized by Google

before the world, nor afraid to bind themselves to believe them, as long as they live, and as long as they exist. For though they are sensible that they may see good reasons to alter their opinions respecting some of their present religious sentiments, yet they absolutely know that they never can see good reasons to alter their belief of the essential doctrines of the gospel. They know that by subscribing an orthodox creed, they do not bind themselves never to grow wiser; but only never to grow wiser than what is written in the sacred oracles of truth. Accordingly, we very seldom hear those complain of orthodox creeds, who really believe and love the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, which are contained in them.

3. If the subjects of grace are established in the doctrines of the gospel; then they are constrained to consider men's religious sentiments as a test of their religious character. While Christians judge of their own religious character by their belief and love of the essential doctrines of the gospel, they must, to be consistent, judge of other men's religious character by the same criterion. If they see no way to become truly pious themselves, but by believing and loving the essential doctrines of the gospel, they cannot see any way how others should become truly pious, but by believing and loving the same essential truths. The subjects of grace, who are established in the essential doctrines of the gospel, act perfectly consistent with themselves, and with the Bible, in making religious sentiments the test of religious character. The Bible represents faith as one criterion of religious character. Our Saviour said to the Jews, "Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." He declared, and required his ministers to declare, that "he that believeth not, shall be damned." And Paul declares that those who do not believe nor love the truth, but believe a lie, shall be damned. It is altogether reasonable and scriptural for orthodox Christians, to judge of men's religious character by their religious sentiments. To disbelieve and oppose the essential doctrines of the gospel, is as real an evidence of a corrupt heart as disobedience to any divine commands. But those who complain of orthodox creeds and confessions of faith, equally complain of orthodox Christians, for judging of their Christian character by their open and avowed religious sentiments.



Digitized by Google

They represent this mode of judging as uncandid, unchristian, censorious, and next to blasphemous. They do not consider that, in so saying, they give a striking evidence that they have an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the essential doctrines of the gospel. If any one is now disposed to ask, Who made you a judge of other men's hearts? I answer, He who required me, and all Christians to judge a tree by its fruit. Heresy, or the disbelief and denial of the essential doctrines of the gospel, is the fruit of a corrupt heart. It is readily acknowledged that those who deny that there are any essential doctrines of the gospel, may consistently exercise charity towards all men, whether orthodox or heterodox; but those who believe that there are essential doctrines of the gospel, cannot consistently extend their charity to those who deny them. And if those who call themselves catholic, were really so, they would approve and applaud the orthodox for their consistent, though not universal catholicism.

4. If ministers of the gospel are established in the great and fundamental doctrines of it; they will not fail to preach those doctrines to their people. They will not be wavering and unsettled in their religious sentiments. They will not think the doctrines upon which they build their own hopes of salvation, are unprofitable to their hearers. They will love to preach the most important truths, rather than any others; and desire to make their people understand them, and feel the weight and importance of them. For this purpose, they will preach them plainly. If they preach upon moral depravity, they will explain it. If they preach upon regeneration, they will explain it. If they preach upon the divine decrees, they will tell what they mean. If they preach upon the great and essential doctrine of the ever blessed Trinity, they will explain what can be explained, and place the mystery where it ought to be placed, not in respect to the three divine Persons, but in respect to the unity of these in the Godhead. If they preach upon the operations of the Holy Spirit upon the hearts of men, they will explain these operations, and the effects which flow from them. Indeed, whatever essential doctrine they preach, they will explain. It is one thing to preach about a doctrine, and another thing to explain it. But the plainness of preaching principally consists in explaining divine truths, in language easy to

Digitized by Google

be understood by every hearer. It is, therefore, by a clear manifestation of the truth, that ministers must effectually commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Again: If ministers are established in the essential doctrines of the gospel, they will preach them fully, as well as plainly. They will not shun to declare all the counsel of God, but unfold all the first principles of the gospel. They will aim to exhibit the harmony, connection and consistency of the various parts of the great plan of redemption, as it was concerted, adjusted and established in the Divine Mind from eternity. They will endeavor to make their people know as much about all the doctrines which God has revealed, as they are able to teach them.

And furthermore: They will preach the fundamental doctrines of the gospel not only plainly and fully, but constantly. Gospel duties cannot be separated from gospel doctrines. Practical preaching is founded upon sentimental. Christian duties must be traced to Christian principles; and therefore these must always be brought into view, in treating upon every subject. In a word, if ministers of the gospel know the grace of God in truth, they will preach the great and essential truths of the gospel plainly, fully, constantly and practically; which will directly tend to quicken, comfort and edify Christians, and to awaken, convince, and convert sinners.

5. If the doctrines which have been mentioned are essential and important, then a people have no reason to complain of their minister for preaching them, as plainly and fully as he can. If he finds them revealed in the gospel, and feels the importance of them in respect both to himself and his hearers, he is morally obliged to exhibit them, without the least ambiguity or disguise. If he seeks to please man, rather than God, he will certainly displease both God and the friends of God. It is extremely unkind and unreasonable for his people to become his enemies, because he tells them the truth. But so unkind and unreasonable have sinners always been, under the plain and faithful preaching of the peculiar and essential doctrines of the gospel. This was the case in the days of Christ. His plain and pungent preaching excited the bitter and mortal enmity of the enemies of all righteousness. Only for preaching the doctrine of divine sovereignty in saving one sinner, and

Digitized by Google

leaving another to perish, the exasperated hearers attempted to push him headlong down an awful precipice. While the apostles preached the same important truths which he preached, they met with the same opposition from an unbelieving and frowning world. And this was what Christ forewarned them, and all his faithful ministers in time to come, to expect, from a faithful discharge of their sacred office. Nor have they been often agreeably disappointed. The offence of the cross has not yet ceased. The fundamental doctrines of the gospel are still offensive to the depraved heart; and much oftener produce hatred, than love, to those who preach the preaching which God bids them.

But we hope better things of the people in this place, who have long been taught the great and precious doctrines of grace, by their late deceased and beloved Pastor; who was one of the most luminous, the most penetrating, the most instructive, the most energetic, the most fervent and successful preachers of the present day. Many, I trust, have been taught of God, and are become established in the essential doctrines of the gospel, and desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow in knowledge and in holiness, until they come to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, and will be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. And those who have not received the grace of God in truth, it may be rationally expected, will no more make such objections to the great and essential doctrines of the gospel, as they have so often heard completely refuted. God can easily cause the good seed which has been sown in their understandings, to spring up in their hearts, and bring forth abundantly the fruits of holiness. The field here has been excellently cultivated and prepared, and he who is to enter into another man's labors, will have the fairest opportunity and encouragement to reap a plentiful harvest, and gather fruit into life eternal; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. I am well persuaded that the pastor elect is established in the great, distinguishing and precious truths of the gospel. He is no novice but has for years labored industriously and successfully in

Digitized by Google

the vineyard of Christ. But considering the corruption of the human heart, he will feel the importance of taking heed how he preaches. Like the royal preacher, let him seek to find out acceptable words, and speak the truth in love. And may He, who has greatly blessed his ministerial labors, continue to smile upon him, and crown his labors among this people with abundant success.



Digitized by Google

# SERMON XIV.

## BOLDNESS OF FAITHFUL PREACHERS.

INSTALLATION OF REV. THOMAS WILLIAMS, FOXBOROUGH. NOVEMBER 6, 1816.

---

**And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.—Ephesians 6: 19, 20.**

THOUGH Paul was a man of genius, of learning, and of eloquence, yet, with all these accomplishments, he felt himself unequal to the arduous and sacred work in which he had been engaged. He had met with great opposition from the Jew and from the Greek, from the learned and the unlearned, while preaching the gospel as he verily thought he ought to preach it. He therefore desires the saints at Ephesus, that, while praying for themselves and other Christians, they would also pray for him, that he might be enabled and disposed to preach the gospel with proper freedom, plainness and boldness. Such feelings and desires were not peculiar to the apostle, but are common to all who mean to preach the gospel faithfully. This warrants us to say,

That faithful ministers, who feel that they ought to preach the gospel boldly, desire Christians to pray for them. It is proposed to show,

I. That faithful ministers feel that they ought to preach the gospel boldly. And

II. Why they desire Christians to pray for them.

I. That faithful ministers feel that they ought to preach the



Digitized by Google

gospel boldly, will appear, in the first place, if we consider that they really believe the gospel is true.

1. The apostles and primitive preachers of the gospel had both a speculative and experimental belief of its truth and divinity. Paul says to the Corinthians, "Brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand." "For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all, he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time." To the Galatians he says, "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel that was preached of me, is not after man: for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it; and profited in the Jews' religion above many mine equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me that I might preach among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." And to Timothy he says, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." When Christ put this question to his disciples, "Whom say ye that I am? Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon Bar-Jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." When some of his disciples went back and walked no more with him, "Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life, and we believe, and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Peter, and Paul,

Digitized by Google

and all the apostles had a firm and unwavering faith in the truth and divinity of the gospel; and under the impression of such a faith, they felt that they ought to preach it boldly. This they declare was the motive which morally obliged them, not only to preach, but to preach with confidence. "We, having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believe, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe and therefore speak." And those who heard them preach after the day of Pentecost, ascribed their zeal, animation, and intrepidity to their belief of the gospel and warm attachment to Christ. "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." As all faithful ministers have been with Jesus, imbibed his spirit, and felt the transforming influence of his gospel upon their hearts, so they believe, and are sure, that it is divinely true. They believe it, not only on the ground of miracles, and prophecies, and other external evidence; but upon internal evidence, or the saving effects which it has produced in their minds. And while they have the witness in themselves of the truth and divine glory of the gospel, they are constrained to feel that they ought to preach it, and to preach boldly. Men are apt to speak with confidence what they confidently believe to be true. And as faithful ministers confidently believe the gospel to be a system of divine truth, so they feel divinely authorized to preach it with great freedom and boldness.

2. Their knowledge, as well as belief of the gospel, carries conviction to their minds that they ought to preach it boldly.

While Paul was under the dominion of an evil heart of unbelief, his understanding was darkened, and he continued grossly ignorant of the great and benevolent design of the gospel. But after his heart was renewed, and the eyes of his understanding were opened, he was prepared for those clear and extensive views of the whole plan of salvation which God designed to give him, and which qualified him to do more signal services in the church than any other of the apostles. This he gratefully acknowledged as a peculiar favor to him, as well as to the church of Christ. "For this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God, which is given to you-ward; how

Digitized by Google

that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery, as I wrote afore in few words; whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ." "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Here the apostle declares that he had a full and distinct knowledge of the whole scheme of salvation as it originally lay in the divine mind from eternity, and as it was clearly revealed in the gospel. This plan of salvation he calls a mystery; because, from the beginning of the world to this day, it was obscured and wrapt up in darkness by the rites and ceremonies of former dispensations, which it was his appropriate business to unfold, explain and inculcate. Favored with such clear and extensive views of the great and glorious design of the gospel, he considered it as a privilege, as well as duty, to preach it boldly. He entreats Christians, therefore, that they would pray for him, that utterance might be given him, that he might open his mouth boldly, in making known the mystery of the gospel, and preach it as he ought to preach it. He saw so much of the wisdom, and grace, and glory of the gospel, that he ardently desired to make all men see the same great and glorious truths which he saw, loved and admired in the astonishing plan of salvation. And all faithful ministers, in whose hearts God has shone, to give them the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ, feel obliged and disposed to preach the gospel boldly. They have not only an experimental, but in some measure, a theological and systematical knowledge of the way of salvation. They are able to explain the nature and design of the gospel, and the various doctrines which compose it, and the various duties which flow from its doctrines, and the mutual harmony and connection which runs through the whole scheme of redemption. And the more clearly and fully they understand the gospel, the more forcibly they feel their indispensable obligation to preach it

Digitized by Google

boldly. Men are never afraid to speak boldly upon subjects which they are conscious that they thoroughly understand. Those ministers, therefore, who are conscious that they clearly understand and love the design, the doctrines and the duties of the gospel, will never be afraid, nor ashamed to declare the whole counsel of God, nor to preach any doctrine or duty of Christianity boldly as they ought to preach it.

3. Faithful ministers feel the sacred obligation of their sacred office, to preach the gospel boldly.

They are the appointed stewards of the mysteries of God; and it is always required of stewards, that a man be found faithful. But how can they be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God, unless they plainly and boldly unfold and make known these mysteries? They are ambassadors of Christ, and are bound to be faithful to him who appointed them. But how can they faithfully discharge this solemn and important trust, unless they boldly preach Jesus Christ and him crucified, and all the doctrines and duties which he has commanded them to preach? Paul felt his obligation as an ambassador, and desired Christians to pray for him, that he might be a bold and faithful one. "Pray for me, that utterance may be given me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." He felt that he could not be a faithful embassador of Christ, unless he boldly and plainly made known the mystery of the gospel, and explained and inculcated those important truths which had been so beneficial to himself and to others. Accordingly, he often appealed to those who had heard him preach, whether he had not given evidence of his fidelity, by preaching the gospel plainly and boldly. He says to the Galatians, "If any man preach any other gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? for if I yet please men, I should not be the servant of Christ." He says to the Corinthians, "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty; not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight

Digitized by Google

of God." And in his farewell address to the elders of Ephesus, he says, "And now behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." He knew and believed that others knew, that he had been a faithful ambassador of Christ, because he had preached the gospel boldly, and as he felt he ought to preach it. All faithful ministers feel the same obligation, as ambassadors of Christ, to preach the gospel boldly. And though they sometimes wish to excuse themselves from preaching some disagreeable and unpopular doctrines, yet they can find no excuse that will bear examination; but after all, feel that they ought to open their mouths boldly, in explaining, proving and inculcating the first principles and self-denying duties of the gospel. But to feel their obligation to this duty is one thing, and to fulfil it is another. This leads me to show as proposed,

II. Why they desire Christians to pray for them that they may preach the gospel boldly, as they feel in conscience bound to preach it.

1. Here the first reason that occurs is, because they are sensible of their own insufficiency to surmount the difficulties that they expect to find in their way of preaching the gospel with Christian freedom and confidence.

Our Saviour taught the first preachers of the gospel to expect peculiar trials and difficulties. "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." This prediction all the apostles found to be true, by painful experience. But no man, perhaps, was ever exposed to greater dangers and sufferings, than the apostle Paul experienced in consequence of preaching the gospel boldly as he ought to preach it. And no preacher more sincerely and frequently desired Christians to pray for him. How tenderly did he address the Christians at Rome on this subject. "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your

Digitized by Google

prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem, may be accepted of the saints." While in bonds, he entreats the Christians at Ephesus to pray for him, that liberty and utterance may be given him, to open his mouth boldly in making known the mystery of the gospel. In his first epistle to the Thessalonians, he says, "Brethren, pray for us." And in his second epistle he repeats his request. "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men." Though faithful ministers, at this day, have not the same dangers and difficulties to experience that the apostle and primitive preachers of the gospel had to meet and surmount; yet the gospel and human heart are still at variance, and the offence of the cross has not entirely ceased. Even now ministers have to set their faces as a flint, to deny themselves, to take up the cross, and resist both the smiles and frowns of the world, so long as they plainly and boldly preach the truth as it is in Jesus. This is a dangerous situation; and naturally tends to turn them aside from the path of duty, to lead them to prophesy smooth things, and to handle the word of God deceitfully. In the view of such impediments to duty, they dare not trust in their own hearts, nor lean to their own understandings. They are deeply sensible that they are not sufficient of themselves to think or speak as they ought, but their sufficiency is of God. Under these impressions, they ardently desire Christians to pray for them, that, as their days, their duties, and their trials are, so their strength may be. They confidently believe that the effectual, fervent prayers of the righteous will avail much, and draw down divine aid in their great and arduous work. They know that God can take away the fear of man, and give them a mouth and wisdom, which none can gainsay or resist. They therefore earnestly desire that Christians would pray without ceasing for them, that when they are weak, then they may be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

2. They desire Christians to pray for them, because they feel their own insufficiency to preach the gospel successfully. Though they should preach the truth plainly and boldly as they ought to preach it, yet they cannot command success. They

Digitized by Google

can only speak to the ear; they cannot speak to the conscience or to the heart. Paul freely acknowledges, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." He tells the Galatians, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." He was duly sensible that it depended upon a divine influence, whether his preaching should be a savor of life unto life, or a savor of death unto death to his hearers; which gave him a humiliating idea of his own insufficiency to preach the gospel successfully, and made him exclaim, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Christ and the apostles bestowed a great deal of labor in vain upon multitudes, who heard them preach the truth in the plainest and boldest manner. And their successors in the ministry very often bestow a great deal of labor in vain, upon their stated hearers. They may preach Sabbath after Sabbath, and even year after year, without apparently converting a single sinner from the error of his way. It absolutely depends upon the special grace of God, whether the best preaching shall be crowned with success. This idea habitually impresses the minds of faithful ministers, and excites an ardent desire that Christians would pray for them, that God would enable them not only to preach the gospel boldly but successfully, and give them many souls as the seals of their ministry, and crowns of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.

In the view of this subject, we may, in the first place, see one reason why the preaching of the gospel makes no deeper and better impression upon the minds of those who hear it at the present day. The apostles preached the gospel with great success among both Jews and Gentiles. They converted myriads and myriads to the Christian faith, and planted many large and flourishing churches in almost every quarter of the world. The preaching of those twelve men produced much greater and better effects than the preaching of a thousand ministers in these later times. To what cause should we ascribe this great difference between the past and present effects of preaching the gospel? Must we not ascribe it partly to the peculiar mode of the apostles' preaching? They always preached boldly, though not always successfully; but yet their success is not unfrequently ascribed to their boldness. As soon as Paul was con-



Digitized by Google

verted, we read that "he preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus." When he first went to Jerusalem, after his conversion, we are told, "he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus." It seems that his bold preaching produced great and saving effects in Judea, Galilee and Samaria. When he and Barnabas came to Iconium, "they both went together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed." It is added, "Long time, therefore, abode they, speaking boldly in the Lord." At Ephesus, "Paul went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months." Though the success of the apostles was partly owing to their preaching boldly, yet their preaching boldly must be ascribed partly to the Christians who perpetually prayed for them, that a divine blessing might accompany their bold and faithful exertions. After the council at Jerusalem had reprimanded Peter and John for preaching the gospel, and forbidden them to speak any more in the name of Jesus, they went and told their own company of believers what the chief priests and elders had said to them. And when their Christian friends heard how they had been treated, "They lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said,—Lord, behold their threatenings; and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word." Their prayers were effectual; for it is immediately added, "they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." The boldness of the apostles, and the prayers of Christians for them, contributed more to their success than all the miracles wrought in their favor. But preachers are not generally so bold, nor Christians so prayerful, at this day, as they were in the primitive days of Christianity. This will sufficiently account for the want of those great and good effects, which were once produced by the bold and faithful preaching of the gospel.

Secondly: This subject teaches Christians that they may do a great deal to assist their ministers in their laborious and arduous work. The primitive preachers of the gospel gratefully acknowledged that they received peculiar benefit from the aid and cooperation of their fellow Christians. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, calls upon the whole church to "greet Priscilla and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus." They assisted

Digitized by Google

him in various ways, by attending upon his preaching and by inviting others to attend upon it; by risking their own lives in defence of his; and principally by praying for him, that he might be enabled to preach both boldly and successfully. In this last way, Christians at this day may greatly assist their ministers in discharging the duties of their office. They are more dependent for success in their work than other men are for success in their secular concerns. Men in their common affairs can obtain the objects of their pursuits with common assistance; but ministers cannot obtain their supreme object in preaching, without the special influence of the Divine Spirit. And there is good reason to believe that the effectual, fervent prayers of their fellow Christians will avail as much to procure this assistance, and to promote their success, as their own prayers and exertions. It is generally in answer to the prayers of his people that God strengthens, emboldens, encourages, and succeeds his faithful ministers in their great and good work. We know that it was in answer to the prayers of the church that the apostles were so remarkably assisted and succeeded in preaching the gospel on the day of Pentecost. Christians, therefore, must certainly know that they can greatly assist their ministers by praying for them, that they may preach boldly as they ought to preach, and successfully as they desire to preach. And they have no more right to neglect to pray for their ministers, than their ministers have to neglect to preach to them.

Thirdly: Since faithful ministers need as well as desire the prayers of their fellow Christians, it is their privilege as well as duty to pray for them. They view it a privilege to pray for their own lives and health and peace and prosperity; and why should they not view it a greater privilege to pray for their own spiritual nourishment and growth in grace? This they know depends upon their praying for their ministers, who are the stewards of the mysteries of God, and whose proper business it is to feed them with knowledge and understanding. If they desire to grow in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, then they will virtually pray for themselves, in praying for their ministers. This Christ taught his apostles and followers. "He that receiveth you receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet. shall receive

Digitized by Google

a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward." Christians have reason to expect that the more sincerely and constantly they pray for their ministers, the more instructive edification and comfort they shall derive from their preaching. But if they forget, or neglect, or refuse to pray for their ministers, they abuse a precious privilege, and injure both themselves, and those who watch for their souls.

Fourthly: Since faithful ministers desire and request the professors of religion to pray for them, they must be extremely ungrateful and inconsistent, if, instead of complying with such a reasonable desire and request, they complain of them for preaching boldly as they ought to preach. Those who profess religion are generally the first and loudest in complaining of bold and faithful preaching. The Scribes and Pharisees made the first and most bitter complaints against the plain and faithful preaching of Christ, and found much more fault with him than even publicans and sinners. When the apostles plainly and boldly preached the gospel in various parts of the world, they met with more opposition from Jews than from Gentiles. And after they had gathered large and flourishing churches, the opposition and defection of professing Christians did more to obstruct the spread and success of the gospel, than the opposition and prejudices of Pagan idolaters. This was a sore trial to Paul, who laments the inconsistent conduct of the Galatians, who had once professed to love his person and preaching. He asks them, "Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" Speaking of his preaching on another occasion, he says, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me; I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion." Professing Christians, at this day, are often the first and fiercest to object against those who preach the gospel most plainly and boldly. Though the men of the world do really dislike such preaching, yet they are generally afraid to complain

Digitized by Google

of it, until they hear and see professors of religion complain, object and oppose. But is it not extremely inconsistent and absurd for professing Christians to complain of ministers for preaching the same doctrines which Christ and the apostles preached, and which they have professed to believe and love? This looks like gross hypocrisy; but there is reason to fear that real Christians do sometimes fall into such inconsistency, and greatly injure the cause which they profess to promote. There is scarcely any thing more embarrassing and discouraging to faithful ministers, at the present day, than the feelings and conduct of professing Christians, in respect to their preaching plainly and boldly the first principles of the oracles of God. Though they believe the doctrine of the sacred Trinity, the doctrine of divine decrees, the doctrine of divine agency, the doctrine of moral depravity, the doctrine of regeneration, the doctrine of disinterested benevolence, the doctrine of unreserved submission, the doctrine of justification by faith alone, and the doctrine of eternal rewards and punishments; yet they cannot plainly and boldly preach these great and solemn truths, without wounding the feelings and exciting the displeasure of those who call themselves Christians. It must be very disheartening to faithful ministers of Christ, to be blamed, reproached and opposed, for preaching as they ought to preach; and as the good of souls requires them to preach; and as all professors of religion are bound to pray that they should preach. This spirit of opposition to divine truth, which is too visibly prevailing, not only among the men of the world, but among professing Christians, bears a dark aspect upon true religion; and directly to stop the mouths, and weaken the hands, and discourage the hearts, of those who mean to preach the gospel boldly as they ought to preach it.

The truths which we have now exhibited will, we hope, be duly considered by those for whom this discourse is principally designed, and excite them to make some suitable reflections and resolutions on this serious occasion.

In the first place, the Pastor elect will spontaneously realize his own insufficiency for the laborious, difficult and important work, in which he has faithfully and successfully labored for a number of years, and in which he still resolves to spend his days. Though he has assiduously cultivated his superior men-



Digitized by Google

tal powers; though he has collected a large fund of classical and theological knowledge; though he has experienced the power of religion on his own heart; though he has seen much of human nature, both in its rude and in its cultivated state; and though he has had peculiar experience in preaching the gospel; yet he is not sufficient of himself to discharge the weighty and solemn duties of the gospel ministry. This, we presume, he has most sensibly felt; and the more he realizes his constant need of divine assistance in every part of his pastoral office, the more he will sincerely desire the prayers of his people, that he may have strength, and courage, and utterance given him, to preach to them boldly and faithfully as he ought to preach. But whether the people of God remember, or forget him in their prayers, he will resolve to preach the truth and the whole truth with freedom and confidence. He will set his face as a flint, put away the fear of man which bringeth a snare, renounce self-dependence, and trust in the Lord Jehovah, in whom there is everlasting strength. He will humbly resolve to be valiant for the truth. He has come upon the stage at an awful crisis; and who knows but he is destined to do much for the propagation of the pure doctrines of the gospel, and for the refutation and suppression of enthusiasm, superstition and heresy. He has long been placed in a very instructive school; and it must be his own fault, if he have not learned wisdom, prudence, patience, humility, meekness, zeal, fortitude and fidelity, by the things which he has seen, and by the scenes through which he has been called to pass. A new field is now opening before him. Let him take courage, and renewedly devote himself to the service of God, and sincerely determine to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that his faithful labors shall not be in vain in the Lord.

The people in this place, will now please to reflect that it is their part to pray for their minister, that his mouth may be opened, his understanding enlightened, and his holy zeal enlivened, to preach to them boldly as he ought to preach. God is about to try you again in regard to the important duty of praying for your pastor. If you have been negligent in the discharge of this duty in times past, you will resolve to be more faithful in time to come. You have good reason to believe

Digitized by Google

that your chosen minister will sincerely desire your prayers for him, that he may be both faithful and successful in laboring for your good; and we charitably hope that it is your present intention and resolution to comply with his reasonable desire and just expectation. Let me, however, entreat you as Paul did and the Ephesians, to "watch thereunto with all perseverance." In this point you will be extremely apt to fail. Upon your first receiving a pastor whom you highly esteem and love, you will not forget him at the throne of grace. But there is danger of your growing gradually remiss in praying for that divine assistance to be given him, which, the longer and the more faithfully he preaches to you, he will the more ardently desire and the more sensibly need. While, therefore, the man you have chosen to watch for your souls, is now standing before you, and implicitly saying, Brethren, pray for me, that utterance may be given me, that I may preach boldly, as I ought to preach, the important and precious truths of the gospel; will you not reply from the heart, God forbid that we should cease to pray for you? Amen.

Digitized by Google

# SERMON XV.

## RECONCILIATION OF SINNERS TO GOD.

ORDINATION OF MR. ZOLVA WHITMORE, NORTH GUILFORD, CONN., SEPTEMBER 5, 1821.

---

**Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God.—2 Corinthians 5: 20.**

EVER since mankind became disaffected to God, he has been calling upon them, in various ways, to become reconciled to him. He has called upon them to return to him, at one time by his own voice; at another, by the voice of angels; at another, by the voice of prophets; at another, by the voice of his Son; and the last of all, by the voice of those whom he has sent forth "into all the world," to "preach the gospel to every creature." Hence says the apostle, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God." Here one thing is implied, and another asserted. It is implied that sinners are in a state of alienation from God; and it is asserted that he intends to reconcile some to himself in time to come, as he has done in time past, by the instrumentality of his sacred ambassadors, whom he has appointed for this important purpose. The whole



Digitized by Google

import of the next may be comprised in this general observation.

It is the proper business of the ministers of Christ to exhort sinners to become reconciled to God.

In order to set this subject in a proper light, it seems necessary to show that sinners are disaffected to God; then, that it is the proper business of the ministers of Christ to exhort them to become reconciled to God; and lastly, that there is a propriety in their exhorting them to such a reconciliation.

I. I am to show that sinners are disaffected to God. This is plainly supposed in the text; for if they were not disaffected to God, there would be no occasion of their becoming reconciled to him. They have not the love of God in them, but are lovers of their own selves. Their supreme love to themselves excludes every spark of supreme love to God; and constitutes that carnal mind which is enmity against God, and not subject to his law, neither indeed can be. They are as really disaffected to God, as those who first rose up in rebellion against him. They wish there were no God, and the belief of his existence gives them pain. They say unto him in their hearts, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." God describes them as ungodly, unholy, unrighteous, rebellious creatures, who would not have him to reign over them, but would fain flee out of his hands. Still they are unwilling to acknowledge that they hate their Creator, Preserver and Benefactor. But when they are constrained to look within, their hearts tell them that they have always cherished hard and unfriendly feelings towards God. They are conscious of having hard thoughts of God, for bringing them into the world in connection with Adam, who involved himself and all his posterity in sin and guilt. How many have complained that by the disobedience of one many should be made sinners! And there is no explanation of this doctrine that will satisfy their minds, or remove their complaint. They complain as much of being brought into the world depraved *by* Adam's sin, as *for* Adam's sin. It is not so much the way by which they are become sinners by Adam which makes them think hard of God, as his conduct in ordering it so that they should become sinners, by a constituted connection with their great progenitor. They are all displeased that God did not order it otherwise. They feel as though they never could

Digitized by Google

forgive God for making Adam their public head, when he knew the fatal consequences which would flow from it, in this world, and in the world to come. Though secure and stupid sinners think but little about this subject; yet when they come to be awakened to realize their fallen, guilty state, their hearts rise in enmity against God; because they make themselves believe that he has injured them, by bringing them into existence under the wretched and deplorable calamity of original sin.

They are disaffected to God, not only because he has brought them into being depraved, but because he has required them, notwithstanding their depravity, to be perfectly holy, and made no allowance for their moral impotence. They admit that God might, with propriety, require angels and even Adam to be perfectly holy, while they continued in a state of innocence; but they think God is unreasonably severe in commanding them to love him with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their mind, when he knows that they have a carnal heart, which is enmity against him. They have always been displeased with the extent, strictness and spirituality of this law. In Christ's day, they endeavored to explain away its meaning. They would not believe it required any thing more than mere external obedience. And it is extremely difficult to make them believe that God does really command them to love him supremely. But when they are convinced that the law does mean what it expressly says, or that God does require them to love him supremely, notwithstanding the total depravity of their hearts; they murmur and complain of his unreasonable and cruel severity, and compare his conduct to that of the task-masters in Egypt, who required the Israelites to make brick without straw. They say that they cannot love God without a change of heart, that they cannot change their own heart, and, of course, that they cannot obey the divine law. Though, under genuine conviction, they see and feel that the law is holy, just and good, yet their hearts rise in sensible opposition to it, and they had rather perish forever than cordially obey it. This has been found to be true by the experience of thousands of awakened and convinced, but unrenewed sinners. When the law comes home to the conscience, they always find within them the heart of an enemy. They feel the spirit and speak the language of the slothful servant. They call God a hard master, reaping where he has not sown,

Digitized by Google

and gathering where he has not strewed. They resist and rebel against the clear convictions of conscience. They cannot bear to feel the obligation, by which the law of God binds them to love him supremely, while they hate him supremely.

Not only the precept, but the penalty of the divine law, is a ground of their disaffection to God. Indeed, they would not complain so much of the precept, were it not for the penalty, which gives it an awful sanction. God commands them to love him, upon pain of his everlasting displeasure. "It is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." "The soul that sinneth it shall die." "The wages of sin is death." The least disaffection to God is a transgression of the law of love, which threatens the least transgression with eternal death. Sinners not only think, but often say, that it is hard to obey the precept of the law, and much harder still to suffer its penalty. They are ready to ask, how it is possible for them to love God when he tells them that he feels disposed to punish them forever for their unfriendly feelings, which they know are wrong, but which they cannot suppress; or how it is possible for them to love a damning God. Such questions as these have been seriously asked; and when asked, have clearly expressed that carnal mind which is enmity to God, not subject to his law, neither indeed can be.

Sinners are still more disaffected to God, when they realize not only what he has required, and what he has threatened, but what he has determined. He has told them that he has determined to save some, and not others, and will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, taking one and leaving another, according to his sovereign pleasure. They cannot support the thought that he should make such a distinction among those who are all in the same fallen, guilty state; and that he should determine, before the foundation of the world, whom he would save, and whom he would destroy. This enhances their disaffection to God, and renders him, in their view, the most odious object in the universe. They hate him more than any other, yea, more than all other beings. They are his most incorrigible and irreconcilable enemies. But yet,

II. It is the proper business of the ministers of Christ, to exhort and beseech them to become reconciled to their holy and righteous Sovereign. It is the appropriate office of ambassa-

Digitized by Google

dors to negotiate a treaty of peace and reconciliation between contending parties. The ministers of Christ are his ambassadors, to bring God's disaffected subjects to a cordial reconciliation to him. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ," says the apostle, "as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." None will doubt whether ministers ought to exhort immoral sinners to become moral; and moral sinners to read the Bible, to call upon God, and externally perform every religious duty. For it is universally allowed that the most vicious can reform, and the most irreligious can become externally religious. But many seem to doubt whether the ambassadors of Christ may go so far as to exhort all sinners to repent, and return to God, and become internally and cordially reconciled to him, by whom they stand condemned. The apostle, however, represents this to be the proper business of the ambassadors of Christ. They are to exhort sinners to reform not only externally, but internally, and to love God for the very same things for which they have hated him. God's faithful ambassadors have always exhorted his disaffected subjects in this manner. Hear the exhortation of Moses to the congregation of Israel. "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live; that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him." Hear the exhortation of Isaiah to sinners. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." This was such an exhortation, to such a sincere and cordial reconciliation to God, as would infallibly secure his pardoning mercy. Hear the exhortation of Jeremiah to the unholy and unsanctified in Israel. "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem; lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it." Hear the exhortation of Ezekiel to the sinners in Zion. "Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new

Digitized by Google

spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" In the same manner the prophet Joel exhorts the same degenerate people. "Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil." Let us now hear how John the Baptist exhorted sinners. "In those days," we are told, "came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Christ himself exhorted sinners in precisely the same language. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Peter said to those hardened and impenitent sinners, who had imbrued their hands in the blood of the Prince of life, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." And Paul told the elders of Ephesus, that he had made it his constant practice in preaching, "to testify both to the Jews and also to the Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Now if Moses and the prophets, John the Baptist, Christ and the apostles, did not mistake their office, and go beyond their duty, in exhorting sinners to repent and become cordially reconciled to God; then it is the proper business of ministers of the gospel to exhort sinners in the same manner, at this day. They are ambassadors for Christ, as Paul was; and it is their duty, as it was his, to say to sinners, "As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." It only remains to show,

III. The propriety of ministers' exhorting sinners to become cordially reconciled to God. Though God commanded the prophets, and Christ commanded the apostles, to urge sinners to become sincerely reconciled to their injured and offended Sovereign, yet many, very many, are ready to call the propriety of this mode of preaching in question. But if the divine character be perfectly holy and amiable, it will be easy to see the propriety of exhorting the most disaffected sinners to become reconciled to God. For,

1. This is their plain and indispensable duty. Their disaffection to God is altogether groundless and unreasonable. He is supremely amiable, and worthy of the supreme affection of all his intelligent creatures. The angels of light who have



Digitized by Google

always stood around his throne, and been best acquainted with his treatment of all his dutiful and undutiful subjects, have never been able to discover the least defect or moral imperfection in his character, laws, or government. Nor is it in the power of sinners themselves to discover any just ground of their disaffection to their Creator and Lawgiver. He has treated them not only as well as they have deserved, but infinitely better. For the truth of this he appeals to their own consciences. "Hear ye now what the Lord saith: Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice. Hear, O ye mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel. O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me." God never has, in a single instance, given any just occasion to sinners to become disaffected to him. Their disaffection is entirely unreasonable and criminal. And who will presume to say that it is not proper that the ambassadors of Christ should exhort and beseech them to become reconciled to God, who has never given them any just cause of disaffection? May not a child be exhorted to give up his unreasonable disaffection to his parent? May not a subject be exhorted to give up his unreasonable disaffection to his prince? Why, then, may not a sinner be exhorted to give up his unreasonable disaffection to the kind Parent of the universe? The unreasonable disaffection of sinners towards God, does not, in the least degree, destroy their obligations to love him with all their hearts. It is their indispensable duty, notwithstanding all their depravity or disaffection, to become cordially reconciled to their Creator, whom they have hated without a cause. There is, therefore, the highest propriety in ministers of the gospel solemnly exhorting them to be reconciled to God.

2. It is proper that ministers should exhort sinners to become reconciled to God, because this is not their only duty, but their immediate duty. They have no right to persist in their unreasonable and criminal disaffection to God one day, or one moment. It is their first duty to become reconciled to God, from whom they have unreasonably revolted, and renounce their causeless disaffection. So Christ exhorted them to do. "Cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of

Digitized by Google

them may be clean also." It is impossible that sinners should do any duty before they become reconciled to God; and this renders it proper and necessary that ministers should lay the axe at the root of the tree, and exhort sinners to renounce their rebellion, and immediately become reconciled to the divine character and government. Christ would not allow those whom he commanded to follow him, any time to delay. And his ambassadors ought to follow his example; and exhort sinners, without delay to become reconciled to God. Besides,

3. Ministers ought to exhort sinners to become internally reconciled, as well as externally conformed to God, because this is not only their duty, and immediate duty, but their most important duty. All their future and eternal interests are suspended upon their reconciliation to God. If they persist in their disaffection, they must finally and eternally perish. But if they renounce their disaffection, and give God the supreme affection of their hearts, they shall escape the wrath to come, and obtain eternal life. It is the proper part of an ambassador to make known the ultimatum of his commission, upon which the success of his embassy must turn. And it is the proper part of the ambassadors of Christ to make known the ultimatum of their commission, and beseech sinners to become reconciled to God, upon which their final salvation depends. It becomes them to use the same language which Paul used in preaching to sinners: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God."

I now proceed to the improvement of the subject.

1. If it be the proper business of the ministers of the gospel to exhort sinners to become immediately and unconditionally reconciled to God; then it is difficult to see how those can justify themselves, who do not discharge this duty of their office. There are not a few who are engaged in the ministry of reconciliation, and preach a great many important truths, who never exhort impenitent sinners to become immediately and unconditionally reconciled to God. And they imagine they have good reasons to justify their mode of preaching. But it is difficult to see the force and pertinency of the reasons they offer in their self-justification. Some offer one reason, and some another. Some suppose that sinners ought not to be reconciled to God,

Digitized by Google

before he becomes reconciled to them. They suppose they ought not to love him, while he hates them and is disposed to punish them. They suppose that his vindictive justice is not an amiable attribute of his nature, and that sinners ought not to love him while that divine attribute stands pointed against them. They say that it is utterly impossible that they should love God, until they believe that he loves them. Then, and not till then, can he appear truly and supremely amiable in their view; and until he appears as their reconciled God, they ought not to love him, because it would be the same as to be willing to be forever miserable. But if sinners have no just cause to be disaffected to God, then he has just cause to be disaffected to them; and if he has just cause to be disaffected to them, then they ought to love him, instead of hating him, for his disaffection towards them, and disposition to punish them. He is worthy of their love before he loves them, but they are not worthy of his love before they love him. He therefore justly requires them to be reconciled to him first, "Return unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts." It is difficult to conceive how those think themselves to be ministers of reconciliation, who teach sinners that they ought not to become reconciled to God, before he becomes reconciled to them. They are so far from being ministers of reconciliation, that they are, in reality, ministers of irreconciliation. They justify sinners and condemn God. They reverse the condition of reconciliation which God has proposed, and propose another, which it would be infinitely criminal for either party in the controversy to comply with.

There are many more, who have another excuse for not urging sinners to become immediately and unconditionally reconciled to God. Though they are loath to say that God has not a right to call upon sinners to become reconciled to him; though they are loath to say that ministers ought not to obey the instructions of him who has appointed them to their office; though they are loath to say that it is not the duty of sinners to become immediately and unconditionally reconciled to God; yet they are ready to say that they do not see how totally depraved sinners, who are laboring under the fatal calamity of original sin, can become immediately and unconditionally reconciled to God. They say that they cannot see how sinners can

Digitized by Google

get rid of their old heart, before God gives them a new heart; or how they can get rid of their sinful principle, before God gives them a holy principle; or how they can get rid of a corrupt taste, before God gives them a pure taste; or how it is naturally possible for them immediately to become reconciled to God: and for this reason, they do not think it is their duty to urge them to do a natural impossibility. This looks like a plausible excuse, and would be a solid excuse, if an old heart, or a new heart were what it is here supposed to be. But the truth is, that there is no old heart, but enmity, and no new heart but love. The excuse is entirely founded in a misapprehension of moral depravity. Sinners are not involuntary in their disaffection to God, nor involuntary in becoming reconciled to him. The moral depravity of sinners is altogether voluntary; and therefore God makes no allowance for it, but commands them to renounce it entirely, and to love him immediately and supremely. Why then should ministers of the gospel make an excuse for sinners which God does not make? or why should not they exhort them to that to which he exhorts them?

It is very strange that so many ministers of Christ, whose peculiar and sacred office it is to beseech sinners to become reconciled to God, should so far mistake and neglect their duty, as to alter the terms of reconciliation; and presume to substitute others so dishonorable to God, and destructive to sinners.

2. If it be the proper business of the ministers of the gospel to negotiate a treaty of reconciliation between God and his disaffected subjects; then it is of great moment that they should well understand the ground of the controversy between the parties at variance. The controversy between God and sinners is the most serious and interesting controversy that ever existed. The ground of it lies deep. It is founded in the essential and infinite difference in the moral characters of the contending parties. The whole moral character of God is pure disinterested benevolence; but the whole moral character of sinners is pure perfect selfishness. No two things in nature are more entirely opposite to each other, than pure benevolence and pure selfishness. Sinners hate God because he is perfectly benevolent, and God hates sinners because they are perfectly selfish. It is morally impossible, therefore, that God and sin-



Digitized by Google

ners should become cordially and mutually reconciled, unless the character of the one or the other be essentially changed. When sinners change their character, and become benevolent, then God can be reconciled to them, and they to him. Or if it were possible (to speak with reverence), for God to change his character and become selfish, then he could become reconciled to them, and they to him. Such a change in their characters would make them friends, as Herod and Pontius Pilate were made friends, while both retained their perfect selfishness. The controversy between God and sinners is not like many controversies among mankind. They often contend through ignorance or prejudice; and all that is necessary to settle their controversies, in such cases, and to bring about a mutual reconciliation, is to enlighten the minds of the parties. But the controversy between God and sinners is not founded in ignorance or prejudice. God is not ignorant or prejudiced in respect to the character of sinners; and sinners are not altogether ignorant or prejudiced, in respect to the character of God; and were they ever so much enlightened respecting it, they would be more, instead of less, reconciled to him. Hence it appears, that none are properly prepared to negotiate a treaty of reconciliation between God and his disaffected subjects, who are not well acquainted with the ground of the controversy between them; and that none can be acquainted with that ground, who are not acquainted with the essential difference between benevolence and selfishness. It is well known that ministers, as well as others, differ very widely in their opinions on these important points; and of course they differ as widely in their opinions concerning the controversy between God and sinners. Ministers may be wise, and learned, and deeply versed in the general knowledge of theology, and yet grossly ignorant of the real ground of controversy between God and his rebellious subjects; and all such theologians are by no means prepared to negotiate a treaty of reconciliation between the two contending parties.

3. It appears from what has been said, that those to whom is committed the ministry of reconciliation, ought to be experimentally, as well as theoretically acquainted with the ground of controversy between God and his disaffected subjects; and to be cordially and firmly attached to his cause and interest. It is of great importance to an earthly prince, that his ambassador

Digitized by Google

should be well acquainted with whatever belongs to his honor and interest; and be cordially and firmly attached to his person and government. But it is of far greater importance, that the messenger of the Lord of hosts should be on his side, and faithfully regard his honor and glory, in settling a treaty of peace and reconciliation between him and his disaffected and revolted subjects. All the ministers of the gospel are messengers of the Lord of hosts, whom he appoints to carry his terms of pardon and reconciliation to those who have transgressed his holy law and deserve to die. They may be faithful, or they may be unfaithful to the important trusts reposed in them. If they are heartily reconciled to God themselves, and sincerely approve of his terms of pardon and reconciliation to sinners, they will discharge their sacred office faithfully, and deliver his messages without the least variation or reserve. But if they are not heartily reconciled to God themselves, and do not sincerely approve of his terms of pardon and reconciliation to sinners; they will betray their trust, and take the part of sinners in their controversy with their Maker, and justify their disaffection and rebellion against him. They will pervert the gospel they preach, or, as the apostle says, they will preach another gospel. We may trace most of the religious errors and delusions in the Christian world, up to the unfaithfulness of insincere ministers of the gospel. No men have it more in their power to devise and propagate great and fatal errors than they have; and no men have actually devised and propagated greater errors than they have devised and propagated. The false prophets under the Old Testament, and the false prophets under the New Testament, were the principal propagators of the most absurd and fatal errors in their days. And where can we now find greater errorists, than those among the professed and unfaithful ambassadors of Christ? Some say, that sinners are not disaffected to God. Some say, though they are disaffected to God, yet they ought not to be reconciled to him. Some say, that they cannot be reconciled to him upon the impracticable terms of the gospel. Some say, all will be saved, whether they comply with any terms, or not. Such are the errorists among professed preachers of the gospel, at the present day, who betray the cause of Him whom they pretend has put them into the ministry of reconciliation. Was it ever more important than it is

Digitized by Google

now, for those who undertake to preach the gospel of the grace of God, to be themselves reconciled to him, and take his part in the solemn controversy between him and his disaffected subjects? They cannot feel indifferent in respect to the result of this great controversy, in which God and all his intelligent creatures will be forever deeply interested. And Christ will not feel indifferent towards the conduct of his professed ambassadors. For he has said, "He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad."

4. If those whom God employs to propose the terms of pardon and reconciliation to his disaffected subjects, are faithful to their trust, and strictly follow his instructions, they may expect to meet with the displeasure and opposition of those who reject the message of grace. The terms of reconciliation, which God proposes to sinners, are extremely disagreeable to their selfish and rebellious feelings; and for that reason, their disaffection to him turns into disaffection and opposition to his faithful ambassadors; who are supposed to be attached to his cause and interests, and hostile to theirs. And this hostility they have often expressed. The sinners in Zion often hated and openly opposed the faithful prophets in Israel. Christ, who was his Father's ambassador, gave great offence to multitudes, who heard him preach the gospel, and faithfully deliver the messages of sovereign grace. And Paul, the ambassador of Christ, found by painful experience that he could not, with all his prudence, preach the gospel so as to please Christ, and at the same time so as to please men. He asks the Galatians, "Do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." It is the proper business of an ambassador, who is appointed to negotiate a treaty of peace between two contending parties, to bring the controversy to a crisis; and as soon as he has fairly stated the ultimatum of his commission, mutual reconciliation immediately commences, or open war is proclaimed. Just so, it is the design of the faithful ambassadors of Christ, to deliver the terms of reconciliation, which God has proposed in the gospel, so plainly, so fully, and so impressively, as to bring the controversy between him and his disaffected subjects to a crisis, and produce either peace or war. Those ministers who preach the gospel plainly, fully, and faithfully, do not usually leave their

Digitized by Google

people as they find them, from Sabbath to Sabbath. They either conciliate, or alienate the affections of their hearers towards their offended and injured Sovereign. They either gladly receive the word of reconciliation, or heartily oppose and reject it. And those who reject the terms of reconciliation, are always displeased with themselves, and generally displeased with those who urge and beseech them to accept such grating and humiliating terms. But though the faithful ambassadors of Christ may expect to meet with more or less opposition from the enemies of the cross, yet they may console themselves with the assurance of meeting with his gracious and final approbation. This was a source of joy and triumph to Paul and his fellow laborers in the gospel. "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish."

5. If ministers of the gospel are sacred ambassadors who are divinely appointed to propose the terms of pardoning mercy to their people; then they ought to take heed how they hear and how they treat them. Men are never placed in a more serious and critical situation in this world, than while they are hearing the ambassadors of Christ praying and beseeching them to become reconciled to God, upon the most gracious and condescending terms. They ought to feel, and in their hearts to say to the ambassador of Christ who is sent to preach to them, as Cornelius said to Peter: "Now we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God." The word of reconciliation, which the ambassadors of Christ deliver, is the word of God and not the word of men, and is to be received as his word, and not as theirs. But they are not to be despised because they are men; and they cannot be despised, without despising God. "He that despiseth," says the apostle, "despiseth not man but God." An earthly prince always resents any disrespect shown to his ambassador, as shown to himself; and Christ has told the world, that he will resent disrespect shown to his ambassadors, as shown to himself. He said to his apostles for their encouragement, when he sent them forth to preach the gospel, "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me."

Digitized by Google

# SERMON XVI.

## THE ESSENTIAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN SAINTS AND SINNERS.

INSTALLATION OF REV. THOMAS WILLIAMS, ATTLEBORO', SEPTEMBER 9, 1824.

---

**And if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth.—Jeremiah 15: 19.**

THOUGH God formed, sanctified, and ordained Jeremiah to be a prophet unto the nations, yet he met with so much opposition, reproach and strife, that he lamented his hard and unhappy lot. "Wo is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth." Notwithstanding this bitter lamentation, God would not release him from his high and sacred office; but told him he had much more for him to do and suffer in delivering his messages to his degenerate people, whom he was about to send into a strange land, where he must share with them in their national calamities. This led him to cry pathetically for divine compassion. "O Lord, remember me, and visit me,—take me not away in thy long suffering; know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke. Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart—I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced. I sat alone, because of thy hand." To this pertinent and pious petition God gives a gracious answer. "Therefore thus saith the Lord, If thou return" (that is to me), "then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me; and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth: Let them return unto



Digitized by Google

thee; but return not thou unto them. And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall; and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the Lord." These gracious promises were made to Jeremiah on the condition that he would take forth the precious from the vile, in delivering the messages of God to his people; that is, if he would, in delivering divine messages, distinguish the righteous from the wicked. From this we may justly conclude,

That ministers should, in their preaching, keep up the essential distinction between saints and sinners.

I shall first show that there is an essential distinction between them; and then show why ministers should, in their preaching, keep up this distinction.

I. I am to show that there is an essential distinction between saints and sinners. They do, indeed, in some respects resemble one another. They are alike in their natural powers and faculties. They are alike in their speculative knowledge and mental improvements. They are alike in their civil concerns and pursuits. And they are often alike in their religious tenets and denominations. In these and various other respects, saints differ no more from sinners, than sinners differ from one another, or than saints themselves differ from each other. But notwithstanding all these points of similarity between saints and sinners, they essentially differ in one important respect, and that is, in respect to their hearts. The hearts of saints are benevolent, but the hearts of sinners are selfish. There is therefore a mutual contrariety between the hearts of saints and the hearts of sinners, which forms an essential distinction between them. Now to make it appear that there is really such an essential distinction between saints and sinners, I would observe,

1. That the inspired writers divide all mankind into two, and but two classes, and distinguish them by very different and opposite appellations.

They call the saints the precious, but sinners the vile. They call saints the godly, but sinners the ungodly. They call saints the children of God, but sinners the children of the wicked one. They call saints the elect, but sinners the reprobate. They call saints vessels of mercy, but sinners vessels of wrath. These

Digitized by Google

and many other names of distinction run through both the Old and New Testament. They are used a vast many times in the Psalms and in the Proverbs, in the Gospels and in the Epistles, and in almost every page of the Bible. They are used not to distinguish one saint from another, nor to distinguish one sinner from another, but to distinguish all saints from all sinners. If they had been used to mark the mere shades of difference between saints, or the mere shades of difference between sinners, they would have but little force to prove any essential difference between saints and sinners. But since all the inspired writers use these diametrically opposite epithets, to mark the only one universal difference between the two classes of mankind, they afford a conclusive evidence that the distinction between them is not merely circumstantial but essential. It is a distinction between benevolence and selfishness, or between sin and holiness; which is as great a moral and essential distinction as can exist between one man and another. It is the same kind of moral and essential distinction as that which exists between Gabriel and Lucifer. The appellations, therefore, which the sacred writers employ in speaking of the two different classes of mankind, give us infallible evidence that there is an essential moral distinction between those whom they call saints and those whom they call sinners.

2. God does that for saints which he does not do for sinners; which proves that they essentially differ.

God said to his captive people in Babylon by the prophet Ezekiel, "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." But he determined to do this for some and not for all. So he told them by the prophet Jeremiah. "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord — and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion." Christ we are told, "came unto his own and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." — This act of sovereignty in changing the hearts of men Christ saw, approved and admired. "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of

Digitized by Google

heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." The apostle also asserts that God "hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." And he says God did actually display such sovereignty towards the Jews in his day. "Even so then, at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace." "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for: But the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." Now, it is easy to see, that as God regenerates saints, but not sinners; gives a new heart to saints, but not to sinners; softens the hearts of saints, but hardens the hearts of sinners; and gives a spiritual discerning of spiritual things to saints, but not to sinners; there must be an essential distinction between them. The hearts of saints must be essentially different from the hearts of sinners.

3. God has made promises of good to saints, but none to sinners; which proves they are essentially different in their moral characters.

He promises to hear the prayers of saints, but not the prayers of sinners. He promises to give the holy, sanctifying and comforting influences of his Spirit to saints, but not to sinners. He promises to hold communion with saints, but not with sinners. He promises saints that he will guard and support them under all the evils of the present life, and cause all things to work together for their good; but he makes no such promises to sinners. He promises to give unto saints eternal life; to prepare mansions for them in heaven; to come again and receive them unto himself, that where he is, there they may be also; but he has made no such promises to sinners. These promises, and such as these, the apostle Peter assures all saints, belong to them exclusively. "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the



Digitized by Google

power of God through faith unto salvation — Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ; whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory; receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." Can we suppose that God would make such great and precious promises to saints and not to sinners, if saints were not essentially different from, and far more excellent than sinners? Besides,

4. God has threatened that evil to sinners, which he has not threatened to saints.

He says to sinners, that their prosperity shall destroy them, and that he will curse their blessings. — Christ says, "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." Again he says, "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Paul says, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Since God has threatened both temporal and eternal evil to sinners, which he has not threatened to saints; we must conclude, that they are essentially different in their moral character. If there was only a gradual difference in the goodness of saints and of sinners, we should naturally suppose that God would make only a gradual difference in his promises and threatenings to them. But when we find that he has promised pure, perfect, eternal happiness to saints in a future state, and threatened complete and eternal misery to sinners in the world to come, we must believe that they essentially differ in the moral exercises of their hearts; — or in other words, that saints love God supremely, but sinners hate him supremely. We cannot conceive that any other than this essential distinction

Digitized by Google

between them, should be a just ground for God's treating them so infinitely different in a future and eternal state. Thus God, by giving peculiar appellations to saints, which he does not give to sinners; by operating on the hearts of saints as he never does upon the hearts of sinners; by making great and precious promises to saints, which he does not make to sinners; and by threatening eternal misery to sinners, which he does not to saints; gives us all the evidence he can give us in this world, that there is an essential moral difference between them.

The next thing is to show,

II. Why ministers should, in their preaching, constantly exhibit and keep up this great moral and essential distinction between those who love, and those who have not the love of God in them. God, everywhere in his word, makes this distinction in speaking to saints and to sinners, and requires ministers to make it, in speaking from him to them. He says to the prophet in the text, "Thou shalt take forth the precious from the vile." He says concerning the priests, "They shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the clean and the unclean." When ministers make the same distinction in preaching to the mixed characters among their people, that God makes in speaking to them in his word, then they are as his mouth, and properly instruct and warn them from him; which is the principal branch of their sacred office. There are several plain and weighty reasons, why ministers should, in their general course of preaching, make and keep up the essential distinction between saints and sinners.

1. This is necessary, in order to preach the word of God intelligibly to their people.

To preach intelligibly and instructively, they must not only recite various and numerous passages of Scripture, but explain the true meaning of the passages they recite and apply; which cannot be done, without keeping in view that essential distinction between saints and sinners, which runs through the whole Bible. That distinction will always be a very useful guide to determine what many passages of Scripture do mean, or at least what they do not mean; and in many cases, it is as important to know what a particular passage does not mean as to know what it does mean. Whenever God speaks to saints, or to sinners, he always speaks to them according to the essential dis-

Digitized by Google

tinction in their moral characters. And though we cannot always know what he means when he speaks to saints, nor always know what he means when he speaks to sinners; yet we may always know that, when he speaks to saints, he does not mean to say any thing to them, which will equally apply to sinners; and when he speaks to sinners, that he does not mean to say any thing to them, which will equally apply to saints. If ministers, then, would preach intelligibly and instructively to both saints and sinners, they must exhibit their distinctive characters in plain and Scripture language, and cause them to know the difference between the godly and ungodly. And when they cause their people to understand this serious and interesting distinction, every one will know how to apply the preaching he hears, to his own appropriate character. All who read the Bible know, that God calls some men saints and some men sinners; and all who hear evangelical ministers preach, know that they call some men saints and some men sinners; but there are many that do not know what God means, or what ministers mean, by calling some saints and some sinners. It is the proper business of ministers, therefore, to explain what God means, and what they mean, by this distinction of characters. It is impossible, that they should preach intelligibly to their people in general, if they do not distinguish them by the Scripture appellations of saints and sinners.

2. It is necessary that they should make and maintain this distinction in their public discourses, in order to give pertinent and profitable instruction to their hearers.

They cannot preach instructively and beneficially to saints or sinners, unless they clearly describe their appropriate, scriptural characters, and cause them to see wherein they essentially differ. Though they may often use the terms, saints and sinners, and occasionally address them under these scriptural appellations; yet their people in general will neither understand nor apply what they hear, to their own appropriate characters, so long as they imagine these appellations denote mere shades of difference. God makes such promises to saints as he does not to sinners; and he denounces such threatenings to sinners as he does not to saints. If these different classes of hearers misunderstand their real characters, saints will be liable to apply to themselves the threatenings made to sinners; and sinners

Digitized by Google

will be liable to apply to themselves the promises made to saints. Such misapprehensions and misapplications are injurious to saints, and may be fatal to sinners. If ministers would preach profitably to their people, they must rightly divide the word of truth, and give to every one his portion in due season. But they cannot preach in this proper, profitable, discriminating manner, without rightly dividing saints from sinners; without rightly describing their diverse and opposite exercises of heart; without applying the promises and threatenings of God according to their respective characters. Though ministers may preach ever so pathetically and solemnly, yet if they do not rightly divide the word of truth, and properly apply the promises of God to saints and his threatenings to sinners, their preaching may be not only unprofitable, but extremely dangerous. It was Christ's principal and most prominent object in his public and private discourses, to draw a plain line of distinction between those who had, and those who had not the love of God in them; or between those who were his friends, and those who were his enemies. Witness his sermon on the mount, and his parable of the publican and the Pharisee. The apostles followed his example, and so should all their successors in the ministry. Moreover,

3. Ministers must distinguish saints from sinners, in order to preach faithfully, as well as profitably.

Faithfulness requires them to do what God has expressly required them to do. He requires them to take forth the precious from the vile. He requires them to teach his people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. They cannot be faithful to God, nor to his people, nor to themselves; unless they sincerely desire and endeavor to preach the most peculiar and important doctrines and duties of the gospel in the most unequivocal and discriminating manner. Here the fear or favor of man is extremely apt to warp their fidelity. The Jewish teachers grossly failed in this point, for which God severely censured them. He said to them, "Ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wickedness." There is nothing more disagreeable to people in general, than to hear the essential distinction between



Digitized by Google

saints and sinners plainly exhibited; and the doctrines and duties, the promises and threatenings of the gospel explained, inculcated, and applied according to this distinction. It makes saints feel their peculiar obligations and deficiencies, and it makes sinners feel their peculiar guilt and danger. If ministers, then, would be clear of the blood of all men, they will declare all the counsel of God; and keep back nothing which they believe will be profitable for the edification and comfort of saints, and for the conviction and conversion of sinners. And if they do not seek to please men, but to be the servants of God, the promise which he made to Jeremiah on the condition of his faithfulness will apply to them individually. "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth; let them return unto thee; but return thou not unto them. And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall; and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the Lord." Christ himself, just before he left the world, gave a similar command and promise to all his faithful ministers, in all future ages. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Thus I have endeavored to exhibit the nature, reality and importance of that distinction, which divides all mankind into two essentially different classes, and which runs through both the Old and New Testament, and gives a peculiar complexion to all the peculiar sentiments of the gospel.

It now remains to apply the subject.

1. It appears from what has been said, that it is utterly a fault in ministers, either designedly or undesignedly, to keep the essential distinction between saints and sinners out of sight. They may commit this fault various ways, they may seldom use the appellations which God uses to distinguish saints from sinners; and when they do use them, they may take care not to explain them in such a manner as to make it appear that they are essentially different in their moral characters. They may very rarely speak of them, or to them, as renewed or unrenewed, converted or unconverted, sanctified or unsanctified. They

Digitized by Google

may decline using such scriptural phraseology, and adopt the language of the world on this subject, which has no precise meaning. The men of the world frequently use epithets to distinguish shades of difference in moral character. They call one a noble and another a mean man. They call one an honest and another a dishonest man. They call one a prudent and another an imprudent man. They call one a mild and another a rough man. They call one a good-hearted and another a bad-hearted man. By such terms as these, they mean to signify that they have the same sorts of good and bad men among themselves that the Bible calls saints and sinners, godly and ungodly, holy and unholy, the precious and the vile. And in this way the men of the world mean to destroy the essential distinction between saints and sinners. Ministers, therefore, who wish to keep this essential distinction between these two classes of men out of sight, may employ the same method to do it. When they have occasion of speaking about saints and sinners, they do not use the Scripture appellations, such as godly and ungodly, converted and unconverted; but adopt the same phrases and circumlocutions that the men of the world use to designate the various grades or shades of difference in the moral characters among themselves. And though many pious hearers do not observe this artful mode of preaching, yet the men of the world generally observe it, and always admire it.

Another way, some preachers take to keep the great distinction between saints and sinners out of view, is to neglect preaching upon such doctrines as necessarily imply it; in particular, the doctrine of total depravity, regeneration, progressive sanctification, and the final separation between the righteous and the wicked in the future world; or if they do occasionally mention these doctrines, they take care not to explain them clearly and intelligibly, but leave their hearers to understand them in their own sense, which they will all approve. For all who believe the Bible, believe it contains such doctrines as a death in trespasses and sins, regeneration, conversion, sanctification, eternal life and eternal death; and they are willing to hear ministers use those words, if they will not explain what they mean, but leave them to put their own construction upon them. And in our religious congregations, people in general do not think that these scriptural doctrines imply an essential

Digitized by Google

distinction between saints and sinners; and if they do not imply this, they are little concerned to know what they do mean. They can hear an Armenian, a Methodist, a Unitarian, or a Universalist, with pleasure and approbation. And when they have heard such preachers, they frequently observe that they could not see but they preached like other men, and that they certainly said a great many good things.

There is another way which some preachers adopt to keep the essential distinction between saints and sinners out of sight, and that is never to explain wherein this distinction consists. People are generally willing to hear that there is an essential distinction between those whom the Bible calls the godly and ungodly, the precious and the vile, if the distinction be not explained, and they are allowed to understand it as they please. But if it be plainly explained to consist in the difference between disinterested love and selfishness, between love to God and hatred of God, between love to holiness and hatred of holiness, between the spirit of Christ and the spirit of the devil, they abhor and denounce the distinction. For this and other reasons, so many preachers neglect and avoid explaining this distinction between saints and sinners, and the doctrines that depend upon it. And this very faulty neglect renders their preaching unmeaning, unprofitable and dangerous.

2. In the view of this subject, we may see how easy it is for ministers to lead people insensibly into great and fatal errors. They may do so, by not mentioning or not explaining the essential distinction between saints and sinners; or by not mentioning or not explaining the peculiar doctrines of the gospel which flow from this distinction; while, at the same time, they preach some valuable truths. The Jewish teachers led the people into many false and dangerous opinions, by preaching some less essential, but neglecting more important doctrines; for which Christ pointedly reproved them. "Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, saying, the Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do." But notwithstanding the good instructions they gave, he denounces a solemn wo against them for their great defect and neglect in their preaching. "Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier

Digitized by Google

matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith; these ye ought to have done, and not to leave the other undone." For such a great defect and fault in their preaching, he calls them "blind guides," "leaders of the blind." By preaching some truths, and omitting others of far greater importance, they insensibly led the people to imagine they were saints while they were sinners, and to hate, oppose and reject the humiliating doctrines of the gospel which Christ preached. In precisely the same way, false teachers now insensibly lead their hearers into gross and fatal errors. Arminians and Methodists preach some precious truths; so do Unitarians and Universalists; but they studiously omit to mention, or to illustrate and prove the peculiar and essential doctrines of the gospel. Such seducers have, for many years past, concealed their poisonous sentiments by mixing them with some pleasing truths. And they are still pursuing the same course; by which they are rooting up orthodoxy, and imperceptibly spreading their fatal delusions. Christ compares those who propagate gross and destructive errors, to wolves in sheep's clothing. They often put on a harmless appearance, and express a tender and ardent desire to lead their votaries in the plainest and easiest way to heaven. But the apostle warns men to avoid them. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple."

3. If there be an essential distinction between saints and sinners, then sinners are very liable to be fatally deceived and corrupted by those who lie in wait to deceive and destroy. Saints have an antidote against the poison of error, that sinners are entirely destitute of. Saints are lovers of God and of his word; they desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. David says to God, "O how love I thy law!" "I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold." The hearts of all good men are attached to divine truth. But sinners are lovers of their own selves, and haters of God, and equally haters of his word. They love darkness rather than light, and error rather than truth. This they have always man-

Digitized by Google

ifested, when both truth and error have been equally exhibited before them. They were more ready to hearken to the false, than to the true prophets under the law; and they have been more ready to hearken to erroneous, than to orthodox preachers under the gospel. They still carry in their hearts a supreme love to error. They love to hear any preachers who tell them there is no essential difference in the characters of saints and sinners. They love any errors better than any truths, and any preachers better than those who preach the doctrines according to godliness. All errorists have human nature on their side; and it is not strange that they make proselytes of those who are under the entire dominion of a carnal mind, which is enmity against God. There never was a time when all classes of sinners in this country were so much exposed to be led into gross religious errors, as at this day. A spirit of false zeal to spread false sentiments is everywhere enkindled, and everywhere spreading like electrical fire, and there is no want of combustibles anywhere. All who are destitute of the love of God and of the love of truth, are surrounded with dangers by the enemies of all righteousness. The self-righteous are in danger of Arminianism. The self-conceited are in danger of Unitarianism. The vicious and profligate are in danger of Universalism. "Let every one that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

4. It appears from what has been said, that the best way the ministers of the gospel can take to guard their people against every species of error and errorists, is to make and keep up the essential distinction between saints and sinners. By making this a prominent object in their general course of preaching, their people will very naturally and easily become acquainted with all the leading doctrines of the gospel; for all these grow out of the doctrine of total depravity, which forms the essential distinction between sinners and saints. If ministers can but make their people understand this distinction in its nature, and in its connection with other first principles of the gospel, they will be able to guard themselves against all fatal errors and the fallacious arguments, which may be used to support them. It is of little avail for ministers to preach against errorists, who are under strong delusion to believe a lie, and who care not what is said against themselves; but they do care for what

Digitized by Google

ministers preach to their own people. For they are afraid of a people well indoctrinated, who are able to defend themselves against erroneous novices. Ministers can do nothing more effectual to guard their people against corrupters, than to teach them plainly the principal doctrines of Christianity. And this indeed is the very way they are required to watch and guard their flocks against those who wish to scatter and destroy them. God requires them to take forth the precious from the vile, that they may be as his mouth; and to teach them the difference between the holy and unholy; or the distinction between truth and error. So long as they do this, they may hope for a divine blessing to attend their labors and instructions. And we know, that so long as ministers in general through New England did continue orthodox, and inculcate the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, they did keep their churches and congregations from great and fatal errors. It is melancholy to see so many standard-bearers fainting in this day of danger, when the enemy are coming in like a flood.

5. We learn from what has been said, how the people may easily discover the real sentiments of ministers by their preaching. They often complain that they cannot know, by their preaching, what the sentiments of ministers are. It is undoubtedly true, that many do mean to conceal their real sentiments. But every method they take to conceal their sentiments, serves to discover them to every orthodox and judicious hearer; because it is much easier to determine what their real sentiments are, by what they do not preach, than by what they do preach. They may preach about every doctrine of the gospel, about every Christian virtue, and about every moral evil; but if they never preach the doctrine of total depravity, nor exhibit the essential distinction between saints and sinners, their hearers may justly conclude, that they do not believe any of the doctrines and duties of Christianity, in their true, scriptural sense. By this criterion, it is easy to discover that an Arminian, an Episcopalian, a Methodist, a Unitarian, or Chauncevan Universalist is essentially erroneous, in respect to the first principles of the oracles of God. Though these different denominations sometimes use Scripture expressions and say some very good things, yet they never preach the doctrine of total depravity, nor the doctrine of regeneration, nor the doctrine of personal election

Digitized by Google

to eternal life, in a clear, scriptural manner; and by this deficiency in their preaching, they show to all who observe it, that they really maintain some erroneous opinions upon these great and important subjects. But people are not half so apt to observe what preachers do not say, as what they do say. And to this it is principally owing, that heterodox preachers are supposed to be orthodox; while on the other hand, orthodox preachers are known by what they do say, and not merely by what they do not say. No man, who plainly preaches the doctrines of total depravity, of special grace, of election, and of reprobation, is ever taken to be an Arminian, or Methodist, or Unitarian, or Universalist. If people, therefore, would take as much notice of what ministers do not say, as of what they do say, they would seldom be at a loss to form a very correct judgment concerning the orthodoxy or heterodoxy of any of the preachers they hear. They could not, indeed, always determine the shades of difference between one orthodox preacher and another; but they could easily determine the essential difference between any orthodox and heterodox preacher. Let orthodox ministers discourse upon what subject they may, they rarely fail to bring into view, either directly or indirectly, total depravity, or the essential difference between saints and sinners; but let heterodox ministers discourse upon what subject they will, they scarcely ever fail to keep this distinction out of sight. Ministers are to blame, if they mean to conceal their sentiments in their preaching; and people are to blame, if they do not discover their sentiments, whether they mean to discover them or not; for there is one plain, easy way by which they may and ought to do it.

6. It appears from what has been said, that there may be a great deal of good preaching in the land, and at the same time, a great want of good preaching. This was the case in Christ's day; the preachers said a great many things which they ought to say, but omitted to say many things of more importance, which they ought to have said. And this is the case at the present day in every part of the Christian world. Preachers are extremely numerous; and they all, perhaps, preach some things which are true, useful, and such as ought to be preached. But alas! how many preach what they ought not to preach, and neglect or refuse to preach what ought to be preached!

Digitized by Google

The time was, when the ministers in this country, all believed and preached the same things. They preached the doctrine of total depravity, and the various important doctrines which flow from it. They distinguished saints from sinners, by the same appellations by which they are distinguished in the Bible. They applied the promises of the gospel to saints only, and its threatenings to sinners only, and its invitations and commands to all without exception. But has not this mode of preaching become very unfashionable at the present day? How many ministers do not take forth the precious from the vile, nor cause their hearers to see and feel the difference! They leave their people to apply the promises or threatenings of the gospel to themselves, without teaching them to whom they belong; and can it be thought strange if they misapply them? In this way, a great deal of good preaching is spoiled and worse than spoiled, by the mere want of a better mode of preaching, which would give meaning and energy to every divine truth.

Finally: This subject calls upon saints to walk worthy of their high and holy calling. They are called the precious, the holy, the godly, the excellent of the earth. These appellations imply, that they have that love to God, that repentance of sins, that faith in Christ, and that series of pure, holy, heavenly affections, of which sinners are entirely destitute. It becomes them to exhibit and maintain the truth, the reality, and the importance of the doctrines according to godliness, which they profess to believe and love. God has given them a new heart and a new spirit, made them partakers of his own nature, and entitled them to the blessings of his own kingdom. And since he has so highly distinguished them, they ought to distinguish themselves from the men, the manners, and the spirit of the world. He has called them out of darkness into marvellous light, that they might be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. By living agreeably to the spirit of the gospel, and contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, they may be happily instrumental, in turning sinners from the error of their ways, and saving their souls from death. This is a powerful motive, which ought to quicken and animate them to be steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that their labor shall not be in vain in the Lord.



Digitized by Google

# SERMON XVII.

## MINISTERIAL FIDELITY.

PREACHED AT THE INSTALLATION OF REV. CALVIN PARK, D. D., TO THE PASTORAL CHARGE OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN STOUGHTON, DECEMBER 18, 1834.

---

The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord.—*Jeremiah 23: 28.*

In Jeremiah's day, there were many false teachers, who presumed to preach their own dreams and delusions, under pretence of preaching divine truth. This was highly displeasing to God, who first reproves such deceivers for their criminal presumption, and then admonishes those whom he had actually authorized to speak his word, to speak it faithfully. "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord." What was called prophesying under the Old Testament, is called preaching under the New. Noah was a prophet and preacher. And the apostle uses the term prophesying, to denote preaching. The spirit of the text, therefore, warrants us to say,

That every minister ought to preach the word of God faithfully. To illustrate this plain and practical subject, I shall first explain this ministerial duty, and then enforce the practice of it.

In pursuing the method proposed, I can hardly fail of saying the same things which have often been said, and often been



Digitized by Google

better said before; but which those who give and receive religious instruction can scarcely hear too often. To preach the word of God faithfully implies,

1. That a minister understands it. This is suggested in the text. "He that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully." By having the word of God, is meant having the knowledge of it, in distinction from having a dream, or a mere imaginary idea of divine truth. It is impossible that a minister should preach the word of God faithfully without knowing what it is. Could the apostles, who were sent into the world to preach the gospel, have fulfilled their duty, if they had not understood the gospel which they were commanded to preach? The word of God contains a complete system of religion, which is entirely different from every false scheme ever devised by man. To preach the word of God is to explain and inculcate the very scheme of religion which he has revealed, and which never could have been known had he not revealed it. But who can do this without understanding what he has revealed? It is true that a perfect knowledge of every text in the Bible is not necessary, in order to preach the word of God faithfully. No man does, nor perhaps ever will, possess such a universal and perfect knowledge of the Scriptures. But yet a clear, a just and general knowledge of the first principles of the oracles of God, is necessary to qualify a preacher for the faithful discharge of his duty. A novice, who is unskilful in the word of righteousness, is expressly forbidden to preach the gospel. Ministers must have the word of God in their understandings as well as in their hearts, in order to be able and faithful instructors of the doctrines and duties of Christianity.

2. They must not only understand the word of God, but know that they understand it. "He that hath a dream," saith the Lord, "let him tell a dream," and not pretend it is my word; "and he that hath my word, let him speak my word;" and speak it as mine, and not as his own. But if ministers do not know that they understand the word of God, how can they, with propriety and sincerity, preach his word as his word? To do this would be daring presumption. There is, however, no occasion of their ever being guilty of this presumption; for if they do understand the word of God, they may know that they understand it. The Bible contains a plain and consistent sys-

Digitized by Google

tem of divine truths, which have a plain, consistent, and important meaning. This is true of the Scriptures in general, and of detached passages in particular. So that those who search the writings of the inspired penmen with attention and impartiality, may know the mind of God in respect to the great and essential doctrines of the gospel. To suppose the contrary, is to suppose that the Bible is a sealed book, and of no use to those for whose spiritual and eternal good it was designed. It must be allowed then, that ministers may understand the word of God, and may know that they understand it. It is true that a man may know a certain truth, and yet not know that he knows it; but the reason is, that he does not see the whole evidence which supports it. But the preachers of the gospel should have such a clear and extensive knowledge of the evidences in support of the gospel and of what it contains, as to know that they understand it. The primitive preachers of the gospel knew that they knew, not only the inspiration but the doctrines of the gospel. They could say, "We believe, and therefore speak." They could confidently declare that they did not preach cunningly devised fables. Paul could assure his hearers that he did not come to them with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, but declaring the testimony of God; for he determined to know nothing among them, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. If ministers do not understand, and know that they understand the gospel, how can they preach the preaching which God bids them? or how can they be faithful to God, or to their people, or to themselves? He that hath a dream may tell a dream; but he that does not know that he knows the word of God, cannot preach it faithfully as the word of God.

3. Fidelity requires ministers to preach the word of God fully. No other book has been so often and so grossly curtailed, distorted and perverted, as the Bible. It has been read, criticized, explained, and preached upon, in a detached and desultory manner, without a due regard to its connection and harmony, which runs through the whole. But fidelity requires ministers to preach the word of God fully, and lay open the great system of doctrines contained in it. The apostle Paul declares, that he did not preach the gospel in a partial and superficial manner, nor shun to declare the whole counsel of God. And if we look into his epistles, we shall find that he developed

Digitized by Google

the great plan of salvation, as devised by God the Father; as executed by God the Son; and as applied by God the Holy Ghost. He explained the distinct offices and operations of the ever blessed Trinity, in creating, redeeming, and governing the world. Of course, he taught the doctrine of divine decrees; the doctrine of human depravity; the doctrine of vicarious atonement; and the doctrine of divine agency in preparing all mankind for their future and final destination. It is difficult to see how ministers can preach the word of God faithfully, unless they preach it in such a full and comprehensive manner. Though they should preach upon every text in the Bible, yet if they should omit, or but cursorily mention the primary truths of the gospel, they would not preach it fully. God is to be clearly and justly seen and known only in the face of Jesus Christ. No part of his character, and no part of his conduct can be properly understood, or described, detached from his ultimate end in the creation and redemption of the world. If the word of God itself be profitable, then all its doctrines and duties are profitable; and ought to be explained and inculcated in their nature, connection, extent, and importance. It is strange, indeed, that any suppose that the best way of preaching the gospel is to inculcate its duties, and pass over its doctrines in silence. This is so far from preaching the whole gospel, that it is not preaching half of it; nor even any part of it. There can be no gospel duties, detached from gospel doctrines. It is, therefore, the indispensable duty of ministers to exhibit the whole gospel, and illustrate as fully as possible all its doctrines and duties in their proper order, connection, and full extent.

4. They must preach the word of God plainly, as well as fully. It is more difficult, as well as more important, to preach plainly, than many are apt to imagine. They should always preach so as to be understood; but they cannot be understood by the great majority of their hearers, unless they use proper words, arranged in their usual, natural, and proper order. The language of the sacred writers is at once pure, simple, energetic, and plain to the least, and pleasing to the most cultivated minds. Christ preached as he conversed, with peculiar perspicuity. Paul imitated his example. He said he had rather speak five words which were easy to be understood, and edifying to common Christians, than ten thousand which they could



Digitized by Google

not understand, and which could do them no good. But there is a plainness of method, as well as of language, which is necessary, in order to preach instructively and faithfully. Preachers may use plain words, and yet throw their thoughts and sentiments together in such a desultory and irregular manner, that it will be very difficult for any to catch their meaning. No man can speak intelligibly to any audience, without previously proposing in his own mind some definite subject, and some definite mode of treating it. Though Fenelon and some other celebrated writers on public speaking, recommend a concealed method, and reprobate the practice of mentioning the leading topics and general divisions of a discourse, yet this seems calculated to excite attention, more than to convey instruction. The perspicuity or transparency of a discourse principally depends upon a lucid order and natural arrangement of ideas. And for this reason, it seems proper that the preacher should expressly mention his main design, and the method in which he intends to accomplish it. This will greatly assist his hearers in understanding and retaining his discourse. Allowing Fenelon to be correct, in representing the whole business of the preacher to consist in proving, painting, and moving the passions; still the best way to effect all these purposes in the same discourse is to divide it naturally, and to mention the heads distinctly. This is evidently the best method in a didactic discourse. And when a subject is of a more practical nature, it is no less necessary to observe a strict order and connection through the whole. It is a question whether it ever be proper to neglect or conceal a method in treating upon any subject whatever, since every subject ought to be treated plainly and instructively. There is no point, perhaps, in which preachers are more apt to fail, especially at the present day, than in the want of perspicuity. Some seem fond of preaching immethodically, that they may more smoothly and imperceptibly pass over, or but slightly touch upon, the most important doctrines of the gospel, which require explanation and proof. Such superficial preaching is better suited to please than to instruct. But Paul avoided all art and disguise in preaching. "We have," says he, "renounced the hidden things of dishonesty; not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but, by manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to

Digitized by Google

every man's conscience in the sight of God." So that, as he adds, "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." This example all will follow, who mean to preach the gospel plainly and faithfully, for their own sake, and for the good of their people.

5. Fidelity requires ministers to preach the gospel in its purity and simplicity. They have no right to mix their own crude and confounded opinions with the revealed truths, which they are commanded to deliver. The teachers under the law were addicted to corrupt the pure word of God by their idle dreams and vain conceits. This is plainly intimated in the text. "He that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord." Truth mixed with error, is like wheat mixed with chaff; and every one knows that wheat is totally unfit for use until it is separated from the chaff. Truth mixed with error is often more dangerous than mere error alone. There was nothing which Christ more severely reproved the Scribes and Pharisees for, than their mixing truth with error in their false glosses and gross perversion of Scripture. They explained away the important truths of the Bible, and palmed their own dreams and imaginations upon the minds of the people, instead of teaching the pure commandments of God. Soon after Christian churches were planted, there arose false teachers, who mixed the absurd opinions of the heathen philosophers with the pure doctrines of Christianity. This gave occasion to the apostle to exhort Timothy and Titus, not to give heed to fables and endless genealogies; but to shun profane and vain babblings and opposition of science, falsely so called. The same practice of corrupting the word of God, still continues and prevails in the Christian world. How many set up reason as their infallible guide in explaining Scripture, and doubt or deny every doctrine, which they imagine does not agree with that false standard! Upon this ground they deny the doctrine of the sacred Trinity, the doctrine of Christ's divine nature, the doctrine of the divine decrees, the doctrine of atonement, the doctrine of special grace in the renovation of the heart, and many other plain, Scripture doctrines. But Paul vindicates himself and the other apostles from thus corrupting the gospel. "We are not as many which corrupt the word of

Digitized by Google

God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." It is essential to fidelity in preaching divine truths, to preach them in their primitive purity and simplicity, as they lie in the word of God, without disguising, obscuring, or explaining them away.

6. It belongs to the office of those who preach the word of God, to defend it against its open enemies. The gospel has never failed to meet with opposition from men of corrupt minds. It is the part of faithful ministers to guard it against the attacks of its most bold and subtle opposers. They are set for the defence of the gospel; and charged, in meekness to instruct those who oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. And to hold fast the faithful word, that by sound doctrine, they may both exhort and convince gainsayers, whose mouths must be stopped. It is the duty of private Christians, and much more of ministers, to "contend earnestly for the faith, which was once delivered unto the saints." A great part of the preaching of the prophets, and of Christ's preaching, was pointed against those who maintained and propagated false doctrines. Paul preached with great plainness and severity against the enemies and perverters of the gospel. "I marvel," says he to the Galatians, "that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel; which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you—let him be accursed." It is as necessary, that preachers should oppose error, as that they should explain and inculcate truth. And therefore fidelity requires them to defend the gospel against all the prejudices, objections, and opposition of gainsayers; and against all the artifices and sophistical reasonings of those, who lie in wait to deceive. I must add,

7. That the faithful preaching of the gospel necessarily includes godly sincerity. It has pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe. He employs ministers as instruments to carry on his gracious purpose. They cannot be faithful in their work, unless they sincerely seek the great end which he is seeking by their ministry. The apostles possessed that pure, disinterested love to God and man, which the gospel they preached enjoined and inspired. "For," say they,

Digitized by Google

"we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." And, "as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, who trieth our hearts." Every preacher ought feelingly to say, what Paul says of himself. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing." Christ requires those to love him supremely, whom he employs to feed his sheep and lambs.

I now proceed as proposed,

II. To enforce the practice of that ministerial fidelity, which has been explained.

1. In the first place, God expressly commands those who preach his word to be faithful in the discharge of their duty. "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord." When he sent Jeremiah to deliver his messages to his people, he said, "Gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee; be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them." He said to Ezekiel, whom he sent to the same people, "Thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear." Our Lord after his resurrection, addressed his apostles, and through them all succeeding ministers of the gospel, in these ever memorable words: "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Paul solemnly enjoins it upon Timothy to be faithful in his ministerial office. "I charge thee, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and kingdom, preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine." The commands which God has laid upon his ministers to preach his word faithfully, are clothed with infinite authority; which they cannot disobey, without exposing themselves to the just displeasure of their supreme and final Judge.

Digitized by Google

2. In the next place, it concerns them to consider, that they have solemnly bound themselves to be faithful in their sacred office. They have publicly professed before the world, that they desire the office of a bishop, and to have the gospel committed to their trust. By accepting this trust, they have laid themselves under peculiar obligations to be faithful stewards of the mysteries of God. Having vowed to the Lord, they have no right to go back. They have pledged themselves to preach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. If they feed their people with chaff, instead of wheat, they cannot fail of feeling the insupportable pains of self-inconsistency, self-reproach, and self-condemnation. But it must be further observed,

3. That faithful preaching has a tendency to save, but unfaithful preaching has a tendency to destroy the souls of men. God himself expressly declares this to be true. Speaking of the false prophets, he says, "If they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings." "Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams — therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord." If ministers preach the word of God faithfully, they may hope to be instrumental of their salvation; but if they are unfaithful, and teach them error, instead of truth, they may expect to be instrumental of involving them in stupidity, delusion and endless ruin. They are under the most solemn responsibility to God, and to their people, whose souls are committed to their charge, and whose eternal interests are in a measure suspended upon their faithfulness, or unfaithfulness. But if they are faithful, they may adopt the grateful and triumphant language of the apostle: "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish." Such are the solemn and weighty motives to ministerial fidelity.

It now remains to improve the subject.

1. If preaching the gospel faithfully includes so much as has been represented, then ministers have a very arduous and laborious work to perform. This I know is generally allowed, but

Digitized by Google

not so generally believed. Not a few are ready to imagine, and sometimes apt to say, that ministers have an easy task, and live an idle life. But neither of these things is true of faithful ministers. If they must understand the gospel; if they must know they understand it; if they must preach it plainly and extensively; if they must preach it in its purity, without any mixture of error; if they must preach it defensively and sincerely; then their work is not only important to themselves and others, but extremely arduous and laborious. It requires much reading and much thinking, to acquire that knowledge of the gospel, and that knowledge of the human heart, and that knowledge of the various ways of preaching, and affecting the human heart, which is necessary in order to preach plainly, instructively, and impressively. Though the Bible affords them abundant matter for their discourses on both common and uncommon occasions, yet it is very laborious to select, arrange, and express divine truths in a proper manner. Invention is the highest effort of the human mind; and no persons have more frequent occasion for the exercise of this mental faculty than preachers of the gospel, in order to find new subjects of discourse, and new modes of treating them. It is easy for him that has a dream to tell a dream. It is easy to preach superficially about the Bible and the doctrines of the Bible; but it is far from being so, to bring forth things new and old out of that treasury, and to feed a people with knowledge and understanding. Many imagine it is an easy thing to preach; and to this it is owing that we have such a multitude of preachers at the present day. It is, however, very difficult and laborious to preach well; as all able and faithful ministers find to be true by actual experience. But besides preaching, they have a vast many pastoral services to perform, which require the exercise of all their wisdom, prudence, zeal, and self-denial. These are greater trials, as a French author justly observes, than any other professional men are called to endure. In a word, the public and private services of faithful ministers are extremely laborious; and more than enough to employ all their time and all their abilities.

2. If the ministers are bound to preach the truth and the whole truth faithfully, then they are bound to preach against every species of error, whether in principle or practice. They are set as watchmen to espy danger, and warn their people

Digitized by Google

against it. If they discover any propagating false and dangerous principles, it is their indispensable duty to expose and refute such errors and delusions; and to warn their people against them, without fear or favor of the propagators; whether they are Atheists, Skeptics, Deists, Unitarians, Arminians, Methodists, Antinomians, or Universalists. Or if they find any who appear to be deceiving themselves, by fixing their hopes of future happiness upon a false and dangerous foundation, it is no less necessary to deal plainly and faithfully with them, and if possible, to convince them of their error, and persuade them to embrace the truth. Fidelity requires the discharge of these duties; which are extremely difficult to perform, without giving offence; for few can patiently bear to have the soundness of their understanding, or the goodness of their heart called in question, or the ground of their spiritual hopes taken away. But if watchmen on the walls of Zion mean to be faithful, they must set their face as a flint; and boldly combat the powers of darkness, and the corruptions of human nature. Jeremiah delivered the divine messages faithfully, though it exposed him to the general reproach of the guilty.

3. If ministers are bound to preach the word of God faithfully, then they can have no excuse for being unfaithful. Their obligations to fidelity are superior to all the reasons they can possibly urge in excuse for unfaithfulness. If they plead ignorance, for not preaching some truths, or for preaching some errors; this will not excuse them. For they are bound to know the truth, and to know that they know it. Therefore, they must be inexcusable for preaching what they do not know; and for not preaching what they do know. If they plead that fidelity would injure their personal interest; this will not excuse them for unfaithfulness. For they have no right to employ their time or strength or talents in pursuing any business, or promoting any interest, that is inconsistent with the work of the ministry, which they have solemnly engaged to perform faithfully. If they plead opposition to the truth; this will not excuse them for neglecting to preach it. It is their duty to disregard or overcome opposition, and to continue preaching the truth, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear. The commands of God, their own engagements, the cause of Christ, and the salvation of souls, create obligations to fidelity, paramount to

Digitized by Google

all possible excuses for unfaithfulness. in the sight of God and man.

4. If ministers are bound to preach the word of God faithfully, then they ought not be afraid to preach it faithfully. Their greatest danger lies in neglecting, and not in doing their duty. The word which they preach is the sword of the Spirit, and if rightly wielded can disarm the enemies of truth. So long as they preach the truth in love, they may safely confide in the promised presence and protection of Christ. But if they are unfaithful, they have just reason to fear; for this will arm both God and man against them. Though they may expect that impenitent sinners and backsliding Christians will be offended, but if they preach plainly, and reprove, rebuke, and exhort them faithfully; yet the frowns of such persons are better than their smiles, and less to be feared. For their disapprobation will sooner or later turn into approbation. They will be constrained to approve of that faithfulness, which was intended and calculated to promote their highest good. Many such instances have been known, under the faithful preaching of the gospel. When the enemies of the truth become cordially reconciled to it, they never fail to be reconciled to those who plainly and faithfully preach it. But if they cannot gain the approbation of their hearts, they may gain the approbation of their consciences in favor of their faithfulness, by putting this pointed question to them: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." Fidelity to God will banish the fear of man, which bringeth a snare. Let us, therefore, my brethren, make the Lord himself our fear and our dread, and then we may hope that his grace will be sufficient for us, and his strength be made perfect in our weakness; and through his strengthening us, we may do all that he has commanded us.

Finally: The whole current of this discourse naturally leads us to believe, that God highly favors those to whom he sends able and faithful ministers. They are the salt of the earth and the light of the world, and one of the richest blessings he ever bestowed upon mankind. As such he esteems them, and promises to give them to his people. "I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." Wherever God sends his faithful ministers,



Digitized by Google

there is ground to hope that he will be with them, assist them in their great and good work, and crown their labors with desired success. Though he has lately called away from this Church and religious Society, a faithful minister as we suppose, yet he has not forgotten or forsaken them; for he is this day about to send them a pastor, whose piety, ability, and fidelity have been long known and highly esteemed. He is opening a bright and promising prospect before the eyes of this little flock; and providentially indicating his gracious design, that they shall not suffer a famine of the word; but shall be guided, comforted, and instructed, by one who shall rightly divide the word of truth, and bring out of his treasure things new and old. They have, therefore, peculiar reason to rejoice on this auspicious occasion, and to hope that they shall see good days, according to the days in which they have seen evil. But it behooves them to remember, that to whom much has been given, of them much will be required.

Digitized by Google

# SERMON XVIII.

## RELIGIOUS RESOLUTION.

PREACHED BEFORE THE MASSACHUSETTS MISSIONARY SOCIETY, AT ITS FIRST ANNIVERSARY, IN BOSTON MAY 27, 1800.

---

**Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded. —2 Chronicles 15: 7.**

THERE was such a peculiar and intimate connection between the civil and religious institutions in the Hebrew republic, that the cause of religion was necessarily and deeply affected, by both the good and bad administration of government. Hence it became a proverb in Israel, "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule the people mourn." Religion never failed to flourish under the smiles and patronage of wise and pious princes; nor, on the other hand, did it ever fail to languish and decay under the frowns and opposition of unwise and wicked rulers. This in some measure appeared, while the whole house of Israel were happily united in one civil as well as religious community; but it still more clearly appears, after the revolt and apostasy of the ten tribes. In the days of Joshua, "Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the first fruits of his increase;" but after his decease, and while there was no king in Israel, the cause of religion visibly decayed, and never revived until the days of David and Solomon. While they were in the administration of government, they made noble and successful exertions to promote the public worship of God, and diffuse a spirit of vital



Digitized by Google

piety among all classes of people. But after Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, and Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, divided the nation, religion received a most fatal blow. In the kingdom of Israel it was greatly corrupted, and in the kingdom of Judah it was generally neglected. Rehoboam and Abijah were both unfriendly to the cause of God, and did much to obstruct and retard its progress. Accordingly, when Asa ascended the throne of Judah, he found religion in a low and languishing state. Iniquity had long abounded, and the love of many had waxen cold. But this deep declension, instead of weakening, awakened his holy zeal, to revive the sinking cause which lay so near his pious heart. His first sincere and vigorous efforts in favor of religion, were highly pleasing to the God of Israel, who sent a prophet on purpose to strengthen his resolution and perseverance in accomplishing the good design which he had so nobly conceived, and so successfully pursued. This is the agreeable account which the sacred historian gives, of some of the first acts of his pious and prosperous reign: "So Abijah slept with his fathers,—and Asa his son reigned in his stead. And he did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God; for he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and broke down the images, and cut down the groves; and commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment." After he had proceeded so far, "The Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded; and he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; the Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you." "Be ye strong, therefore, and let not your hands be weak; for your work shall be rewarded." This seasonable message from the God of Irael, gave new life and vigor to Asa and all his pious subjects. For it is added, "And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage." "And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon; for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the Lord his God was with him." In this connection, the words of our text naturally suggest this animating truth to our present consideration:

Digitized by Google

That the friends of God have good grounds for unshaken resolution in promoting the cause of religion.

To set this subject in a proper light, I shall endeavor to show,

I. That resolution is necessary in promoting the cause of religion.

II. That the friends of God have good ground to be bold and zealous in promoting such a noble and important design.

I. Let us consider the necessity of resolution in promoting the cause of religion.

Resolution is the essence of that mental strength, which gives energy to all the powers and faculties of body and mind. It is composed of love, zeal and confidence, which are the most operative affections of the human heart. When a man has conceived a design which engages his supreme affection, which engrosses his whole attention, and which he firmly believes he is capable of executing, he then feels a strong resolution to call forth all his latent powers into vigorous exercise, to accomplish the object of his wishes. Such resolution has always had a principal influence in affecting all the great things which have ever been affected by the men of the world. Equal resolution, though of a different kind, is no less necessary in promoting the cause of religion, than in promoting any other great and difficult undertaking. Men of piety may have time and opportunity, and learning, and wealth, and power, and influence, to promote the cause of truth, and yet never exert themselves in this great and good design, unless they possess a firm and unshaken resolution. But all good men, who have this noble quality, are properly prepared to espouse the cause of God, amidst a frowning world. Hence the inspired writers unitedly inculcate resolution as the principal thing necessary, in order to succeed in promoting the interests of religion. "Be ye strong, therefore, and let not your hands be weak," says the prophet to Asa and the men of Judah, who were engaged in this pious and important work. When Jehoshaphat visited his kingdom, and discovered the prevalence of vice and irreligion, he exhorted the proper reformers to be bold and zealous in the discharge of their difficult duty. "Behold," says he, "Amariah the chief priest is over you in all matters of the Lord; also the Levites shall be officers before you." But notwithstanding



Digitized by Google

all this aid and protection, he adds, "Deal courageously, and the Lord shall be with the good." When Shecaniah, a bold and zealous friend of God, urged Ezra the priest to espouse the sinking cause of virtue and piety, for which he had been fervently praying, he plainly intimated that resolution was indispensably necessary to affect a religious reformation. "Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee; we also will be with thee; be of good courage, and do it."

If we now turn our attention to those whom God has employed as eminent instruments of building up his kingdom, we shall find that a bold and persevering spirit was the most prominent trait in their character. Though Moses was a man of meekness, yet he was no less a man of firmness and resolution. He feared not the wrath of the king, nor the frowns of his court, nor the murmurs of the false and faint-hearted Israelites; but boldly pursued the cause of God, in defiance to the united opposition of all the enemies of the church. Elijah displayed peculiar courage and zeal in appearing on the Lord's side and espousing his cause, at a time of general, and, as he thought, of universal declension. He not only opposed and confounded all the prophets of Baal, but even dared to deliver the message of God to Ahab, whom he knew had been seeking his life. It was a firm and unshaken resolution, which enabled Nehemiah to carry on and accomplish the work of God at Jerusalem, in opposition to all the intrigues and threats of Sanballat and Tobiah, and their numerous confederates. For, being admonished to consult his personal safety, he nobly replied, "Should such a man as I flee?" What invincible firmness did Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego discover, when they maintained the worship and glory of the only true God, before the mouth of the lions' den, and the flames of the burning fiery furnace? A bold and undaunted spirit was the most striking lineament in the character of John the Baptist, who was sent as a pioneer, to prepare the way of the Lord. The meek and lowly Jesus himself was "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." He spake with a courage and boldness with which never man spake. His undaunted resolution in purging the temple, surprised even his disciples, until they recollected it was written, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." The holy apostles imbibed the bold and zealous spirit of their divine

Digitized by Google

Master, which rendered them superior to all opposition, in spreading the gospel among both Jews and Gentiles. This the enemies of truth most sensibly felt, and most explicitly acknowledged. For we are told, "When they saw the boldness of Peter and John,—they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." And when these two apostles were arrested in their work, they bid defiance to the threats of their malignant opposers, and made this solemn appeal to their consciences: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." Paul, that chosen vessel to bear the messages of grace to those sitting in the region of the shadow of death, was a man of astonishing resolution and zeal. He dared the dangers of the sea, and the perils of the wilderness. He attacked the false religion and vain philosophy of pagan priests and moralists. He regarded not the terror of tyrants, nor the rage and violence of persecutors; but boldly declared the whole counsel of God. And though his friends frequently advised him to avoid the dangers and evils to which he exposed himself in the cause of Christ, yet his persevering zeal and resolution would not suffer him to desert nor neglect the benevolent design which he had determined, at all hazards, to pursue. Hear his bold and undaunted language: "Behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Luther was raised up to purge away the errors and delusions of the Church of Rome, and to spread the pure truths of the gospel through many of the states and kingdoms of Europe. This was a most arduous and dangerous task. Accordingly, to fit him for his work, God inspired him with a bold, enterprising, unconquerable spirit. This animated and supported him amidst the greatest labors and contests that have ever, perhaps, fallen to the lot of any individual since the days of the apostles. As Calvin stood next to Luther in propagating truth in opposition to error, so next to that great reformer, he possessed the largest share of

Digitized by Google

genuine resolution and fortitude. But though Zuinglius was a man of more penetration and knowledge, and commanded a more eloquent and persuasive pen than either Luther or Calvin, yet, by his great timidity and irresolution, he often injured the glorious cause which he sincerely wished to promote. Thus it appears from the experience of ages, as well as from the testimony of Scripture, that a pious and persevering resolution is indispensably necessary, in order to propagate the gospel, and build up the kingdom of Christ in the world. I now proceed to show,

II. That the friends of God have good grounds for such unshaken resolution, in promoting such a great and good design. The precept in the text is connected with an animating promise. "Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded." Here I shall mention a few of the weighty motives to bold and vigorous exertions in the cause of religion.

1. The friends of God have often been succeeded in their sincere attempts to promote his glory in the conversion of sinners. He has been pleased to allow them the privilege of being workers together with him, in strengthening and enlarging his spiritual kingdom. This privilege they have sometimes zealously improved, when they saw religion was declining, and multitudes of sinners were perishing in their sins. At such a time, Asa set himself to revive the sinking cause of God. He first prepared the way, by removing the obstacles which stood opposed to his pious design, and then used the proper means to awaken the attention of his subjects to the things which belonged to their everlasting peace. In this arduous work he persisted for years, and happily succeeded in attaining the object of his desires, his prayers and exertions. His son Jehoshaphat followed his good example, and carried on the work which his father had successfully begun. After several wicked princes had reigned over Judah, Jehoiada the priest, in the minority of Joash, strengthened the things that remained and were ready to die, and, by his vigorous exertions, brought about a great reformation in religion. You remember that Hezekiah, Josiah, Ezra and Nehemiah, were firm and faithful friends of God; and every attempt they made to promote his cause was crowned with signal success. I might mention the apostles, Luther and

Digitized by Google

Calvin, David Brainard and many other missionaries, who have done much to spread the savor of Christ's name among both their own countrymen and heathens. So many instances of success in so many ages and parts of the world, in promoting the cause of religion, clearly demonstrate that the work, though attended with great and innumerable difficulties, is really practicable. And this practicability affords a solid ground of encouragement, in undertaking and pursuing the benevolent design. There is something extremely animating in the prospect of success. It always inspires the mind with irresistible zeal and fortitude in seeking a desirable object. This alluring motive, God, in his providence, holds up to the view of his friends, who are sincerely engaged to promote his cause.

2. The promotion of religion is such a noble and laudable design, that it is even glorious to fail in the attempt. In all great and difficult undertakings, there is always more or less danger of being eventually disappointed. It is not in man to command success, even in his most lawful and benevolent pursuits. The men of the world are often frustrated in accomplishing their wisest and best concerted designs. And the friends of God have not unfrequently been disappointed in their pious efforts to spread the knowledge of truth and promote the interests of religion. Many societies formed for this benevolent purpose, have failed of answering their own and the public expectation. But in all these cases, in which the failure has not been owing either to the negligence or the unfaithfulness or the despondency of those employed in concerting and executing the design, their attempts have always met with general approbation and applause. Melville Horne appears amiable and respectable, notwithstanding his want of success in his mission, and notwithstanding his own acknowledged timidity and irresolution. Some of the more ancient promoters of religion, by their bold, though unsuccessful attempts, endeared their names to future ages. At a time of great degeneracy in Judah, "the spirit of God came upon Zachariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the Lord, he hath also forsaken you.. And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king, in the

Digitized by Google

court of the house of the Lord." This bold and sincere attempt to promote the reformation and salvation of sinners, though it failed of desired success, finally reflected peculiar honor upon the name of Zachariah. For, when Christ told the Jews that the blood of all the prophets should be required at their hands, he mentioned in particular "the blood of Zacharias, whom they slew between the temple and the altar." Christ himself labored in vain and spent his strength for naught, in preaching the gospel to the Jews; but though Israel was not gathered, yet he was glorious in the eyes of his Father. The apostles preached the same gospel in many places, with little or no success; but yet they were a sweet savor of Christ in them that perished, as well as in them that were saved. John Wickliff was unsuccessful in the same work in which Luther succeeded; but yet his noble, though unsuccessful exertions, have rendered his name illustrious through all the protestant nations. If good men should fail of spreading the gospel to the extent of their desires and expectations, yet their sincere and vigorous attempts shall meet the just approbation of both God and man. Some seem to be backward to engage in this work, for fear they shall not succeed. They imagine they see a lion in the way; but supposing there should be a lion in the way, or supposing the worst that can be supposed, that some unforeseen obstacles shall arise that cannot be surmounted; it will be glorious to fail, after they have done all that was in their power to do. This the friends of God ought to consider as a solid foundation for fortitude and zeal, in undertaking and prosecuting such a noble and laudable design; in which they have nothing to lose, but much to gain, by their most zealous and bold attempts.

3. Those who espouse the cause of religion, have reason to expect the peculiar presence and assistance of God in their pious exertions. The cause of religion is emphatically the cause of God, in the promotion of which his heart is wholly engaged. The zeal of the Lord of hosts centres in the execution of his purpose of grace toward this fallen world. For the attainment of this grand object, he is constantly employing every creature, and directing every event, in the universe. While any of his friends, therefore, feel his spirit and heartily espouse his cause, he must be pleased with the motives of their conduct; and afford them all the protection and assistance which

Digitized by Google

they need, in doing their part to promote his gracious design. Accordingly we find express promises of his presence with those who sincerely endeavor to promote his cause. He directed Azariah to tell Asa and the men of Judah in his name, "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him." He engaged to assist and protect Jeremiah, while pleading his cause in the midst of the most formidable opposition. "Thou, therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee; be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. For behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee." Ezekiel tells us that God gave him a similar promise in a similar case. "And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them." "Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant, harder than flint have I made thy forehead; fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house." The command which Christ has laid upon all his faithful ministers to spread the gospel, is enforced by a promise of his continual presence. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Such peculiar promises of divine support, protection and assistance, apply to all those who are heartily engaged to spread the knowledge and blessings of the gospel among the perishing children of men; and are designed to inspire them with resolution and zeal in the great undertaking. Every sincere Christian, every faithful minister, every pious and zealous missionary, may adopt the language of the apostle, and say, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Whose hearts and hands, therefore, must not be strong, while they are sincerely engaged in that work which they know is highly pleasing to Christ, and in the performance of which, they have just ground to expect

Digitized by Google

his promised presence and protection? Especially when they consider,

4. That their benevolent desires and exertions to advance the interests of religion, shall certainly be attended with the approbation and prayers of all good men. These have universally imbibed one spirit, and heartily desire the prosperity of Zion. Here the distinction of different denominations ceases to operate, and admits an entire union in sentiment and feeling. Good men, in whatever denomination of Christians they are found, unitedly seek the spread of the gospel and the prevalence of religion. And though they may differ in opinion, respecting particular measures to promote the common cause of Christianity, yet they really unite in the general object, and sincerely pray that it may be eventually obtained. They feel the spirit of Paul, who said, "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will,—What then? Notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." The friends of God universally wish well to, and heartily pray for, those who are sincerely engaged in spreading the gospel, and promoting the salvation of sinners. Agreeably to the direction of Christ, they daily offer up their desires to God in that comprehensive petition, "Thy kingdom come." And whenever they see any successfully employed in building up this kingdom, they naturally join with, and assist them in the good work. We have a striking instance of this in the context. Though the ten tribes had generally revolted from the true God, yet there were some pious men among them; and these united heart and hand with Asa the king of Judah, in promoting the cause of true religion. Accordingly it is said, "They fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the Lord his God was with him." The sincere and successful promoters of religion will always have the approbation and prayers, and, in that way, at least, the concurrence and assistance of all good men. This, indeed, makes them really strong; and strength is a peculiar source of resolution and zeal. Besides,

5. They are equally sure of the esteem and affection of all those whom they shall be instrumental of converting. Though men are naturally averse to being awakened, convinced and converted, yet after they have become reconciled to God, they

Digitized by Google

never fail to feel a peculiar affection for those whom they view as instrumental of their spiritual and eternal good. Paul bears testimony to the ardent affection which some of his hearers had felt towards him, whom they had viewed as the instrument, under God, of their saving conversion. "I bear you record, that if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me." How much have faithful and successful missionaries been beloved and caressed, by those to whom they have carried the gospel, which turned them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God! No men in Judah were more sincerely esteemed and venerated, than Asa, Jehoiada, Hezekiah and Josiah, who were the happy instruments of reforming and converting sinners. If men are faithful and successful in seeking the salvation of souls, they will not only deserve, but receive the gratitude and esteem of those whom they are the means of bringing home to God. This consideration may well support and animate them, in suffering all the reproach and opposition they may meet with in spreading the gospel, and taking the subjects of the prince of darkness out of his hands. I must add,

6. That all the sincere endeavors and extraordinary exertions in favor of religion, shall finally meet a glorious recompense of reward. God has promised to reward men for the faithful improvement of all their talents. And what better use can they make of the blessings of providence, than to employ them in building up the kingdom of God? This is the most important design carrying on in this world, and even in any part of the universe; and, therefore, to be instrumental in promoting this, is to do the greatest good which lies in the power of man to do. No person can employ his time, his interest, his knowledge, and all the weight of his character, to a better purpose than that of spreading the gospel, and promoting the eternal interests of his fellow men; and there is no other way in which he can secure a more ample reward, in the great day of retribution.

But, besides the parable of the talents, we find particular promises to those who make peculiar exertions to build up Zion. Such is the promise in the text. "Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak; for your work shall be rewarded." The same idea is suggested by the apostle James.



Digitized by Google

"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." The apostle Paul says to Christians in general, "Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." And the prophet expressly declares, "They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever and ever." These promises of a glorious recompense in a future state, ought to animate good men at this day, as they animated Moses, the prophets, the apostles, and even Christ himself, to the most bold and vigorous exertions in the cause of religion.

It now remains to improve and apply the subject, with proper freedom and plainness.

In the first place: It is natural to conclude from what has been said, that the friends of God have been very negligent in promoting his cause in the world. When a man, merely for the want of resolution, does not perform any important work which belongs to him to perform, and which he has time, opportunity and abilities to perform, we never scruple to say that he is guilty of negligence. It is certainly the proper business of the friends of God to promote his cause. He formed them vessels of mercy for his own use. He called them out of darkness into marvellous light, that they might be "the light of the world," and "the salt of the earth." And he has commanded them to seek the interest of his kingdom above every other object. It is, therefore, their appropriate and important business, to promote the cause of religion. And it must be acknowledged that they have long had time, opportunity and ability, to perform the duty devolved upon them. But have they been faithful? Are there not many indubitable marks of their negligence? Does not the languishing state of religion, bear testimony to their timidity and indolence? Had they been bold, and zealous, and active in the cause of God, would there have been so many of the human race, at this day, involved in Jewish, Pagan, Mahommedan, and Papal darkness? Have there not been Christians in Asia? Why then has Asia been so long perishing for the want of gospel light? Have

Digitized by Google

there not been Christians in Africa? Why then has Africa been so long perishing for the want of Christian knowledge? Have there not been Christians in Europe? are there not many there still? Why then is so great a part of that quarter of the world still ignorant of the pure doctrines of the gospel? Has there not long been a succession of pious men in America? Why then are there so many of the aboriginals still perishing in their native barbarity and ignorance? Have we not many godly ministers in these United States? Why then are there so many declining churches, so many destitute congregations, and so many individuals abandoned to vice, irreligion and infidelity?

These are plain indications of negligence in the friends of God, for years, if not for ages past. Had Christians in every age possessed the spirit of the apostles and the primitive believers, what great things would they have done to promote the cause of Christ! Or had they been as wise as the men of the world, and as zealous to promote the salvation of others, as sinners are to promote their temporal interests; the gospel would have long since been carried to the ends of the earth. Or, indeed, if the same zealous, bold and undaunted spirit, which has lately fired the breasts of Christians in Europe and America, had fired their breasts but a few years ago, the face of religion would have undoubtedly appeared, at this time, unspeakably different. Nothing has been wanting, since the revival of learning, the invention of printing, and the discovery of the magnet, to prevent the universal spread of the gospel, but merely Christian resolution and zeal. This long and great negligence calls for the humiliation of Christians in general, and especially of Christian ministers and magistrates; who ought to have been the first in zeal and resolution to promote the cause of Christ and the spread of the gospel. The world now looks like the field of the sluggard, because Christians, like the sluggard, have been crying, "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep." The present melancholy state of Christianity throughout the world, reproaches all its friends for their past irresolution and negligence.

The next thing to be inferred from what has been said is, that none will ever do much to forward the work of spreading the gospel, without a large share of Christian zeal and resolu-

Digitized by Google

tion. Men may be pious and sincerely wish well to the benevolent design, and yet do more to defeat than to accomplish it, if destitute of a truly missionary spirit. In order to carry into effect such a difficult and laborious undertaking, those who enter upon it must be all awake and alive to the important object before them. But none will feel a proper concern for others, who do not feel a proper concern for themselves. None will be greatly engaged to promote religion abroad, who are not equally engaged to promote it at home. None have any encouragement to embark in the adventurous cause of propagating the gospel, unless their hearts glow with love to God, and a tender concern for the souls of men. They must be weaned from the world, they must be stripped of mercenary motives, they must be willing to deny themselves and take up the cross; before they can possess that firm and persevering resolution which is necessary to meet the reproach and opposition to be expected, in spreading a religion which has never failed to awaken all the malignant passions of the human heart. They must sit down and count the cost, lest, after having put their hand to the plow, they should look back, and betray the cause which they engaged to befriend. Why have attempts of this kind so often proved abortive? Has it not been chiefly owing to a worldly spirit, which has palsied all pious resolution and zeal? And who can expect to speed better, without a better spirit? What will lifeless meetings, what will proper resolutions, what will verbal engagements avail, without bold, zealous, persevering exertions? No person is properly prepared to be a member, and much less to be a missionary, of this society, who has not a heart to spend and be spent in the arduous undertaking, and to meet all the evils and embarrassments which may eventually attend it. A cold heart, a timid mind, a feeble hand, are by no means fit to be employed in a work which calls for the warmest zeal, and the most vigorous exertions.

But since the friends of God have such good ground for unshaken resolution in promoting the cause of religion, we may justly infer, in the last place, that it is not yet too late to attempt the propagation of the gospel through this extensive country. Though we have lost much time, and neglected many favorable opportunities for such an undertaking; though

Digitized by Google

an awful stupor has seized the minds of many of the professed friends of God; though the enemies of religion have, within a very few years, greatly increased in numbers and strength; though they have set every engine in motion, to spread error, Deism, and even Atheism, through every corner of our land; though, I say, all these obstacles stare us in the face, and must be overcome, in order to propagate the gospel among those who are perishing for the want of it, yet it may not be too late to effect the difficult and important design. Good men, as well as bad, are able to do almost any thing which they think they are able to do. Difficulties vanish before resolution. There never was so great a declension of religion in Judah, but that a reformation was always effected, when good men had only zeal and resolution enough to attempt it. If the few friends of God in this country, therefore, were only awake, united, and possessed of proper zeal and fortitude, they might, under the divine direction and influence, put a check upon the progress of vice and infidelity, and extend the limits of the Redeemer's kingdom where Satan is now reigning without control, and leading multitudes of poor, deluded creatures to eternal destruction. Christianity is a cause which is destined to prevail; and which is destined to prevail by the blessing of God on human exertions.

This we, my brethren, have in practice professed to believe, by uniting for the purpose of sending the gospel to those who are perishing for the lack of vision. "Let us be strong, therefore, and let not our hands be weak;" for we have all the encouragement desirable, to pursue with vigor and fortitude the work which we have seriously and deliberately undertaken. Though we and others have too long neglected it, and, by our neglect, given rise to great and formidable difficulties, yet these mountains shall become plains, before a pious, bold, missionary spirit. It has been God's usual method, to arise and plead his own cause, at those very times when it appeared to be on the very point of extinction. It was when Jeroboam the son of Nebat had made Israel to sin, and wellnigh corrupted the whole church, that God raised up Asa and others, to rekindle the dying, glimmering flame of religion. It was when the two tribes and a half were pining away in their iniquities, and resembled the valley of dry bones, in Babylon, that God awa-



Digitized by Google

kened the zeal and blessed the exertions of his friends, to bring about their conversion and deliverance. It was when the Man of sin had defaced and nearly destroyed the Christian religion, that God raised up a constellation of bold and zealous men, to espouse and spread his sinking cause. Hence the late extraordinary efforts in Europe and America to "crush the wretch," or, to use a more decent expression, to extinguish Christianity, afford a strong ground of faith, that the time, yea, the set time to favor Zion, is come. For it has been God's uniform conduct, when the enemy came in like a flood upon his people, to set up a standard against him. And we are happy to say that God has already begun to set up his standard in various parts of the Christian world; and his friends are now rallying around it, with uncommon zeal and resolution, to defend and promote the interests of his kingdom. An unusual missionary spirit has spread through England, Scotland, Ireland, many parts of Germany, and a number of the United States. This ought to animate us, as it animated the directors of the Missionary Society in London. In one of their communications to the Society, they say, "From Germany, and a vast body of associated ministers in Lusatia, assembled from all parts of Christendom, we have received the most fraternal good wishes for the accomplishment of our designs, and their great satisfaction in our enterprise, which has warmed and stimulated them to fresh exertions; while they cry day and night to God, for our success, from the Carpathian mountains to the snows of Norway." They add, "America, stirred up by your example, has caught the holy flame. So that the Lord Jesus, the great Head of the church, seems to be awakening a similar spirit throughout all places of his dominion." There is yet another promising prospect before us. In the last and present year, there has been a more extensive and extraordinary effusion of the divine influence in many parts of our land, than has been known in the course of almost sixty years. God is now visibly arising to plead his own cause; and shall we not, when we hear the sound of his goings, bestir ourselves to promote the prosperity of Zion? Under all these favorable circumstances, if we are not wanting in our zeal, resolution and exertions, we have nothing to fear in the pursuit of our great and interesting object.

Digitized by Google

What if our number be small? A small number firmly united in sentiment and zeal, may do wonders in promoting the cause of Christ. This has been demonstrated by those, who first carried the gospel to three quarters of the world. What if our first and feeble efforts should meet with little or no success? This, instead of throwing us into despondency, should serve to rouse us to more zealous and vigorous exertions, in such a difficult and important undertaking. What if our pecuniary resources are few, and unprotected by legal authority? There is no ground of discouragement on this account, provided we are only faithful and successful in the discharge of our duty. It is only for God to bestow his grace upon our churches, as he did upon the churches of Macedonia, and our churches will to their power, yea, beyond their power, abound in the riches of their liberality, and even pray us to receive their gifts, and take upon us the care of ministering to the relief of those who are famishing for the bread of life. What if the missionary field be wide? This presents an animating motive, rather than a discouraging obstacle. The prospect of the salvation of millions should awaken our desires and endeavors to civilize those who are not civilized, and evangelize those who are not evangelized, through this widely extended continent. The United States are abundantly able, in respect to numbers and wealth, to spread the gospel through all North and South America. And we were, there is reason to believe, raised up and formed into a civil and religious community, to perform this service for God, in grateful return for his distinguishing and protecting mercy.

But where, some may ask, shall we find men of a truly missionary spirit, who will freely sacrifice their ease, their interest, their health, and even their lives, to carry the gospel to the poor in our new settlements, and to the savages in the wilderness? This, we acknowledge, is the greatest apparent difficulty to be expected and to be surmounted, in the business before us. But this we may safely refer to God. It is his to provide instruments to do his own work. But if the harvest be plenteous, and the laborers few, it is ours to pray the Lord of the harvest, to send forth laborers into his harvest. And may we not cheerfully confide in him, who hath formed so many missionary societies in New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts, to raise

Digitized by Google

up a sufficient number of pious, zealous, bold missionaries, to carry their pious and important design into effect?

But let us turn from the dark to the bright side of the work, in which we have publicly engaged. What if the set time to favor Zion should be at hand? What if there should be a general effusion of the Divine Spirit upon all our religious societies? What if the attention of both ministers and people everywhere, should be awakened to the object we are pursuing, and they should, like the men of Israel, fall in to our assistance in abundance? What if the numerous inhabitants in the new settlements should generally be formed into large and flourishing churches? What if the poor heathens should have an opportunity and a heart to embrace the gospel? In a word, what if this whole continent should be both civilized and gospelized, through the instrumentality of this and other missionary societies? Who would not have reason to rejoice? And who would have more reason to rejoice, than those who were the most sincere, active, bold and zealous in bringing about such happy events? These are not imaginary prospects. If God intends to make us a happy, he will make us a holy people; and if he intends to make us a holy people, he will employ the proper means to effect his purpose. Let us then, my brethren, take courage; let our hearts and hands be strong; for there are certainly prospects within our view, which, whether realized, either before or after we are laid in the dust, will abundantly reward us for all that we can do, to build up the kingdom of our Divine Redeemer.

Digitized by Google

# SERMON XIX.

## UNITY OF SENTIMENT.

PREACHED BEFORE THE CONVENTION OF CONGREGATIONAL MINISTERS, IN BOSTON, MAY 31, 1804.

---

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.—1 Corinthians 1: 10.

UNITY of sentiment has a happy tendency to promote and preserve that mutual affection, which ought to reign in the hearts of all the followers of Christ. There is nothing which can disturb the peace, or alienate the affections of any society of Christians, while they really believe and openly profess the same religious sentiments. The church at Corinth, which Paul planted, abounded in brotherly love, so long as they mutually agreed in believing and professing the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. But when a disagreement in their religious opinions appeared, it destroyed their mutual attachment, and involved them in bitter animosities and contentions. The apostle, perceiving the primary cause of these deplorable evils, laid the axe at the root of the tree, and entreated them to unite in sentiment, as the only proper and effectual way to recover their former peace and tranquillity. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you." By this he did not mean to inculcate insincerity, or urge them to speak the same thing, while they did not believe the same



Digitized by Google

thing; and therefore he immediately adds, "but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." Such a unity of faith seems to be his darling theme, in his writings to other churches. In his epistle to the Philippians, he says, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." And in his address to the Ephesians, he enlarges upon the subject, and represents Christ as appointing the means of grace for the particular purpose of uniting all his followers in the belief of the same truths. "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine." These passages confirm the construction we have given of the text, and leave us no room to doubt that the apostle meant to enjoin it upon all Christians, to be united in their religious sentiments. It is, therefore, the intention of the ensuing discourse, to illustrate the propriety of this divine injunction.

Paul was a man of sound judgment, and of extensive information. He had studied Moses and the prophets. He had read the writings of the heathen sages, and thoroughly examined their religious opinions. He had been well acquainted with the Jewish teachers, and had once been carried away with their vain traditions. And besides all this, he had, upon clear conviction, renounced his former creed, and cordially embraced the pure principles of Christianity. Hence he knew by experience as well as speculation, whether men ought to be required, notwithstanding their various talents, their various means of information, and their various modes of thinking, to become united in their religious sentiments. Upon this subject he was the most impartial and the most competent judge. And since he has solemnly enjoined it upon the whole Christian world, to

Digitized by Google

speak the same thing, and to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, it must be presumption to call the propriety of his own precept in question. But though we may not dispute the propriety of the apostle's injunction, yet we may inquire into the reasons upon which it is founded. And there are two very plain and obvious reasons, why Christians should be required to think alike upon religious subjects.

One reason is, that God has given them an infallible rule of faith. His word contains a complete and connected system of divine truth. All the doctrines which compose this system are to be believed, and all which stand in opposition to it are to be rejected. It is a perfect standard, by which all religious opinions are to be tried and decided. Hence those who are assaulted by false teachers, are directed to regulate their faith by this criterion. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." The apostle agrees with the prophet, in representing the sacred oracles, as an unerring guide in matters of faith as well as practice. He asserts, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." God having given Christians such a complete system of divine truth, there is a plain propriety in his requiring them to believe not only that it is a complete system of divine truth, but also to believe all the particular truths, which compose the system. For it would be absurd to require them to believe the system in general, and yet allow them to disbelieve any or all the particular truths contained in it. So that if it be conceded that the Bible is any rule of faith, it must be acknowledged that it is a perfect rule of faith. And since all Christians have this perfect rule of faith in their hands, God may justly require them to form their religious opinions exactly according to it; which is precisely the same thing as to require them to unite in their religious sentiments. For it is a universal maxim that when two things agree with a third, they also agree with each other. If therefore, we say, as we ought to say, that God may properly require all Christians to agree with the Bible; then we must say that he may properly require them to agree with

Digitized by Google

each other, or to "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." But since it may be thought that this argument is lame, because Christians are imperfect creatures, who are incapable of understanding and following that perfect rule of faith which God has given them; it seems necessary to observe,

In the second place, That the word of God is not only a perfect rule of faith, but sufficiently plain and intelligible to every capacity. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." The word of God is no less plain than powerful. It must be plain, because the truths contained in it naturally result from the character of God, and from the various relations which mankind bear to him and to one another. All who are capable of knowing that they are the creatures of God, are equally capable of knowing what he has required them to believe concerning himself, and concerning their own character, their present situation, and their future state. This may be easily illustrated. The doctrine of moral depravity, for instance, is agreeable to the observation and experience of all the children of men. The doctrine of divine decrees is level to every one's capacity, who is able to form any just conception of the existence and character of God. The doctrine of Christ's atonement is agreeable to the common sense of mankind, who have always entertained some idea of a Mediator between them and their offended Sovereign. The doctrine of divine influence upon the human heart, in the production of its moral exercises, has been generally believed by heathens as well as Christians. The doctrine of God's existing a Trinity in Unity, and the doctrine of the personal union of humanity and divinity in the glorious Immanuel, are as easy to understand, though not so easy to explain, as any other doctrines in Scripture. Nor is it any more difficult to remove all plausible objections against these high points in theology, than to remove all plausible objections against the existence of motion, or spirit, or personal identity, or any other visible or invisible object. These observations might be extended to every doctrine of the gospel; but there is a shorter and easier way to demonstrate the plainness of that rule of faith which we

Digitized by Google

find in the sacred oracles. The Bible is the word of God; he gave it to be a rule of faith to all; he knew the characters, the circumstances, and the capacities of all; it must therefore, be plain and intelligible to all. To deny this, is to impeach both the wisdom and goodness of God in giving us his word. Now, if God has given a perfect rule of faith to all, which all are capable of understanding, then there appears to be a propriety in his requiring all to believe and speak the same things in matters of religion. It is no less proper that he should require all to believe alike in respect to the whole system of revealed truth, than that he should require all to believe alike in respect to any single article of Christianity. But who will say that it is not proper that he should require all to believe alike, in respect to any one doctrine of the gospel? But if we allow the propriety of his requiring all to believe alike in one, in two, or in ten points, we must be constrained to allow that it is equally proper that he should require all to believe alike in all points. No reason can be assigned for a single exception in this case, if the rule of faith be perfectly right, and altogether intelligible.

Though these few observations may be deemed sufficient to establish the propriety of God's requiring Christians to be united in their religious sentiments, yet candor seems to demand a fair and distinct consideration of some of the most ingenious and plausible things which have been urged against this unpalatable doctrine.

The objection which first occurs to the mind upon this subject, arises from the great and visible diversity in the intellectual powers and external circumstances of Christians. It is supposed to be naturally, as well as morally impossible, that they should all think alike upon religious subjects, so long as this internal and external difference remains.

The whole force of this objection will vanish, if we only consider that unity of sentiment does not require equality of knowledge. Ten, or twenty, or twenty thousand persons, of different degrees of knowledge, may be united in the same sentiment, or in the same scheme of sentiments. A pastor and his people may embrace the same religious opinions in general, though as individuals, they may possess very different powers of mind, and very different degrees of mental improvement. A whole denomination of Christians may be united in their distinguishing ten-



Digitized by Google

ets, though some may be much better able than others to explain and defend their peculiar system of doctrines. It is easy to see how such a unity of sentiment may take place among such a variety of individuals, without an equality of knowledge. For, so far as they all know the same scheme of sentiments, they all agree; and so far as some feel their deficiency in knowledge, they do not pretend to judge; and, of consequence, do not presume to differ. And it is only in this way, that there can be perfect unity of sentiment in heaven. As one star differs from another star in glory, so angels will differ from saints, and one saint differ from another, in the state of perfection. But their difference in knowledge will not create any diversity of opinions respecting the same subjects. Saints will agree with angels so far as their knowledge extends; but so far as it fails, they will wait for further light. And just men made perfect in holiness, will conduct in the same manner towards those who had been endowed with superior powers, and had been longer instructed in the school of heaven. It is, therefore, just as easy to see how Christians may, notwithstanding their difference in knowledge and talents, come to an entire unity of faith in this life, as in the life to come.

The wide difference in the education and instruction of Christians, is often supposed to be an insuperable bar in the way of their becoming sentimentally united, in their present imperfect state.

There is no doubt but Christians are extremely prone to imbibe and retain the peculiar doctrines in which they have been early and uniformly instructed. But since they have the word of God in their hands, it is completely in their power to bring their own opinions and the opinions of their instructors to an infallible standard, and to decide for themselves what they ought to believe, or to disbelieve. Neither their private nor public teachers can lay them under a natural necessity of thinking, or reasoning, or believing wrong; but only throw difficulties in the way of their thinking, or reasoning, or believing right. And it is their indispensable duty, if they meet with such difficulties, to surmount them; and form their religious sentiments according to the holy Scriptures, which will necessarily unite them in the truth. It was in this way, that Paul, and all the primitive Christians. whether Jews or Pagans, divested

Digitized by Google

themselves of the errors and prejudices of education, and became united in the belief of the gospel.

Another thing strenuously urged against the doctrine we are pleading for, is the right of private judgment, which is supposed to give Christians full liberty to differ in opinion as much as they please.

It is readily granted that every Christian has a right to think, to read, and to converse upon any religious sentiment, in order to collect evidence of its truth, or falsehood; and after that, to judge according to the evidence which he has collected. But he has no right, in any case, to examine and judge under the influence of prejudice, and form his opinion contrary to the dictates of reason and the declarations of Scripture. Though the Bereans were commended for searching the Scriptures, in order to determine whether Paul preached the truth, yet we have no ground to suppose that they would have been commended, if they had rejected the truth after they had searched the Scriptures. What they were commended for was, their honestly seeking the best evidence of the truth, and their heartily embracing it upon that evidence. This was their duty as well as privilege; but it was neither their privilege nor duty, to examine and reject the doctrines of the apostle, which were perfectly agreeable to the word of God. In this instance, we see the nature and extent of the right of private judgment. It is a right which all Christians have, to see with their own eyes, and to form their religious sentiments according to the infallible standard of truth. So that the proper exercise of this right will not suffer them to differ, but constrain them to see and to embrace the same truths.

There is but one other objection, which appears to be worthy of notice; and this is drawn from the fourteenth chapter of Romans, in which the apostle is supposed to allow Christians to differ in their religious sentiments, and only exhorts them to view their difference in opinions with a candid and charitable eye.

This is rather an objection against the apostle himself, than against the leading sentiment in this discourse; for it supposes that in writing to the Romans, he contradicts what he had written, five or six years before, to the Corinthians. But who can really suppose that he would require the Corinthians to be per-

Digitized by Google

fectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, and yet expressly allow the Romans to differ in their religious opinions? The truth is, the apostle wrote consistently, and his consistency will appear, if we only look into the chapter from which the objection is drawn. He is there treating of the ceremonial law, which was then abrogated by the gospel. He allows that real Christians might entertain different opinions concerning the Mosaic rites and ceremonies, which were things in their own nature indifferent, and which might be observed or neglected, under a sense of duty. Accordingly, he forbids them to censure one another on account of such non-essential points of difference, and exhorts them to exercise mutual affection and esteem. But, at the same time, he reminds them that they must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, where their opinions as well as actions would be either approved, or condemned. From this it appears that the apostle did not allow the Christians at Rome, any more than the Christians at Corinth, to differ in opinion; but if they did differ in opinion, concerning mere non-essential points, he exhorted them to exercise mutual love and forbearance. This is the plain meaning of the apostle in the fourteenth chapter of Romans, which is entirely consistent with his requiring all Christians to "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

Having set the propriety of God's requiring Christians to be united in their religious sentiments, in as clear and consistent a light as I am able, I shall now attempt to point out a number of serious and interesting truths, which naturally flow from the subject.

1. If God does, with propriety, require Christians to believe alike upon religious subjects, then it is not a matter of indifference what religious sentiments they embrace.

Some seem to think that there is but one truth which is absolutely necessary to be believed, and that is the inspiration of the Scriptures. They suppose, if men only believe the Bible to be divine, they are at perfect liberty to believe, or to disbelieve the doctrines contained in that sacred volume, without the least offence to God. Yea, some presume to say that God is as much pleased with that variety which appears in the faith of Christians, as with that variety which appears in their external features. On this supposition, it must be a matter of total indifference

Digitized by Google

what scheme of religious sentiments any man embraces, in order to obtain the divine favor. But how can this pleasing and prevailing opinion be reconciled with that unity of faith which we have been considering? It appears that men are bound to believe what is true, by the same authority by which they are bound to do what is right. They are as much under law to God, in respect to faith, as in respect to practice. They have no more reason, therefore, to hope that God will save them, without believing the doctrines which the gospel contains, than without performing the duties which the gospel enjoins. Their future and eternal happiness as much depends upon the rectitude of their faith, as upon the rectitude of their conduct. It is true that every deviation from the law of faith will not exclude them from the kingdom of heaven; nor will every deviation from the law of love; but there are some essential doctrines to be believed, as well as some essential duties to be performed, in order to obtain eternal life. Our Saviour said to the Jews in his day, "For if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." And in his last interview with his apostles he said unto them, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." The faith here mentioned is saving faith; this saving faith implies a belief of the gospel; this belief of the gospel implies a belief of the doctrines of the gospel; and this belief of the doctrines of the gospel, our Saviour affirms, is absolutely necessary in order to salvation. We have no right, therefore, to entertain the thought that it is a matter of indifference what religious sentiments men embrace; for it appears that God has suspended his favor and their everlasting happiness, upon the condition of their believing, as well as loving, the great and essential doctrines of the gospel.

2. If Christians have been justly required to be united in their religious sentiments, then we have reason to believe that they have contracted a great deal of guilt from age to age by embracing and propagating error. Though the multitude of them who first believed the gospel, were of one heart and of one soul, and continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, yet this union of faith and of love was of short duration. Some among these primitive professors of Christianity soon raised an unhappy dispute concerning circumcision, which



Digitized by Google

could not be decided without the aid of an ecclesiastical council. This, we know, was followed by greater and more dangerous errors and disputes, which corrupted the purity and disturbed the peace of the principal churches in Greece and Asia, even while the apostles were living. And the same mystery of iniquity which began to work in their day, has continued to operate, through every age of the church to the present time. There have been, and still are, as great and dangerous errors in the Christian as in the Pagan world. Indeed, the very errors of Jews, Heathens, and Mohammedans, are often to be found in Christian creeds. And these corruptions of Christianity have divided the Christian world into a vast variety of sects and denominations; who have hated, opposed and persecuted each other, with fiery zeal and unrelenting cruelty. Here then every one must see, that those who have embraced and propagated such gross and destructive errors, have had no excuse to make. They were favored with a plain and infallible rule of faith. They were tenderly and solemnly admonished to speak the same things, and to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. And they were threatened with the loss of the divine favor, if they either added to, or deducted from, the sacred canon of Scripture. They have always, therefore, drawn upon themselves a heavy load of guilt, by causing divisions, debates and persecutions; by corrupting the sentiments and destroying the souls of men; and by obstructing the spread of the gospel and the prosperity of the Redeemer's kingdom.

3. It appears from what has been said, that Christians who are united in the belief of the truth, have a right to blame those who think differently from them upon religious subjects. We often hear it said, that one man has no right to blame another merely for differing from him in his religious sentiments. But why may not any man who really believes a certain doctrine of the gospel, blame another for disbelieving and denying that doctrine? The notion that men ought not to blame one another for thinking differently upon religious subjects, is built upon the principle that none can really know that their own sentiments are certainly right. But this is a false principle; because there is a plain and infallible rule of faith, which gives those who conform to it, certain evidence of their

Digitized by Google

believing the truth. And a certainty of being right in sentiment is very different from the strongest confidence of being so. Those who embrace error, may be extremely confident that they embrace the truth, and they may mistake confidence for certainty. But should they ever actually embrace the truth, they will then know that their present opinion is right, and that their former one was wrong. Paul verily thought that he knew the truth, while he rejected the gospel; but when he really embraced the gospel, he knew that he knew the truth, and that his former opinion was a gross and dangerous error. The question among Christians is not, who are probably, but who are certainly right, in their belief of the great and fundamental doctrines of the gospel? There is certainty to be obtained in these points; and all who have obtained it, know that those who differ from them in these points are certainly wrong. It is true, indeed, their knowing themselves to be right, is no proof to others that they are so; but it authorizes them to say positively that all who deny the great truths which they believe, are grossly and criminally erroneous.

Accordingly, the inspired writers everywhere direct those who embrace the truth, and know that they embrace the truth, to avoid, to condemn, and even reject all such as hold and propagate false and dangerous opinions. "Cease, my son," says Solomon, "to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." Paul says to the Romans, "I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." He directs the Galatians to condemn and reject the perverters of the gospel. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel; which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." And before he concludes the epistle, he adds, "I would they were even cut off which trouble you." The beloved and benevolent apostle John, after all his pathetic exhortations to brotherly love, expressly forbids Christians to receive, or even countenance the teachers of false doctrine. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him

Digitized by Google

not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds." In these instances, the apostles appear to follow the example of their divine Master, who solemnly warned his friends to avoid and reject false doctrines and false teachers. Whilst he was upon earth, he said, "Beware of false prophets." "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." And since his ascension to heaven, he highly censured the churches in Asia for not censuring and rejecting those who had crept in among them, and propagated gross and fatal errors. It is therefore extremely difficult to conceive how it is possible for those who are united in the belief of the truth, to obey these divine directions and admonitions, without disapproving and condemning, and in some cases, totally excluding from their communion, such as openly deny the essential doctrines of Christianity.

4. If there be a propriety in God's requiring Christians to be united in the belief of the truth, then there appears to be no propriety in attempting to unite them in affection, without uniting them in sentiment. Many seem to be much engaged to promote Christian union and harmony in this way. They warmly urge us to overlook the vast variety of religious errors in the Christian world, and to unite in affection, with all who bear the Christian name. They would have us give up the groundless hope of ever becoming united in sentiment; and to use all our efforts to bring about mutual love and peace among all the professors of Christianity. But is this either a proper, or lawful method, to obtain the desirable end proposed? It seems the apostle did not deem this a proper method to remove the divisions and disputes in the church of Corinth. Instead of urging them to overlook each other's errors, and agree to differ in sentiments, he exhorted them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, that then they might love as brethren, speak the same thing, and live in perfect peace. And this is the only proper way to promote brotherly love, among any, or all denominations of Christians, upon a solid and permanent foundation. For the brotherly love which the gospel requires, is very different from general benevolence. We ought to feel benevolently towards all mankind, and wish well to the bitterest

Digitized by Google

enemies of Christianity. But it is hard to conceive how the true believers of the gospel can exercise brotherly love, to those who appear to disbelieve and despise the precious truths upon which they found their hopes of heaven, and in the contemplation of which they expect the happiness of heaven will chiefly consist. They can no more exercise brotherly love to such as disbelieve and deny the essential doctrines of the gospel, than they can exercise brotherly love to such as deny the gospel itself. Unity of faith is the only proper basis of unity of spirit. Christians may be, and must be united in affection, so far as they are united in sentiment; but so far as they are disunited in sentiment, they are and must be disunited in affection. There is, therefore, no propriety, nor prospect of success in attempting to unite the professed friends of Christ in brotherly love, without first uniting them in the belief of the same essential doctrines of the gospel.

But supposing that the whole Christian world could be brought to unite in affection, while they retain all their different and inconsistent opinions; it would be utterly wrong to attempt it. For, if Christians should form such a coalition, it would be criminal in itself, and highly injurious to the cause of religion. They would disobey the divine injunction, to "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." They would become an unchristian combination, to countenance and support each other in all their errors and delusions. They would, in practice, justify all the errors and delusions of deists, atheists and skeptics. And they would actually exercise that same kind of catholicism, which heretics and infidels have so long been pleading for; and by which they have done more mischief to Christianity, than by any other weapon which they have ever employed against it. Under the pretext of promoting universal toleration, they have taught multitudes and multitudes, to extend their catholicism to disbelievers, deniers and opposers of the gospel. This unlimited catholicism naturally tends to subvert the gospel, and to involve the whole world in error and infidelity. Let none, therefore, cherish this spirit and strengthen the hearts and hands of the enemies of truth, by attempting to unite Christians in affection, without uniting them in the belief of the great and essential doctrines of Christianity.

Digitized by Google

It now appears from the whole tenor of this discourse, that it seriously concerns all who acknowledge the truth and divinity of the gospel, to use every proper method to become entirely united in sentiment. The apostle enjoins this duty upon the Corinthians, with peculiar solemnity and pathos: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." He addresses the Ephesians on the same subject, with equal ardor and zeal. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called — endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The propriety and importance of this, he proceeds to show, by observing "there is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." And he inculcates this sentimental union upon the Philippians, with still warmer and tenderer feelings. "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." If these divine precepts ever bound Christians, they bind them still. If Christians were ever able to obey these divine precepts, they are still able to obey them. And if Christians were ever under obligation, they are still under obligation, to use every proper method to become united in their religious sentiments.

For this purpose, therefore, let them freely examine the various points in which they mutually differ. This is, undoubtedly, too much neglected on all sides, through indolence or aversion. One side are very apt to imagine that those who differ from them, have no Scripture nor reason on their side, but are altogether governed by an improper spirit, in forming their opinions upon religious subjects. But if they would freely examine each other's peculiar sentiments, they would probably find that those who differ from them, have sometimes been as laborious, impartial and judicious, in searching after truth, as they have been; and have approached nearer to it in some points than they have done. There is no ground to suppose that any one

Digitized by Google

denomination of Christians, nor any individuals in any one denomination, have engrossed all truth, and renounced all error. If Christians in general, therefore, would more freely examine each other's sentiments, they would think much more nearly alike upon disputed subjects.

It would have the same happy tendency, if they would examine the points of difference between them, candidly, as well as freely. Candor would dispose every one to lay aside prejudice and partiality, and make him willing to discover whatever is erroneous in his own sentiments, and whatever is true in the opinions of others. It is much more owing to a deficiency in candor, than to a deficiency in discernment, that so many disputes arise, and remain unsettled among the various denominations of Christians. If they would put on candor, it would cure them of bigotry, and open the eyes of their understanding, to discover truth and error wherever they exist. And they must imbibe this amiable and conciliating spirit, before they can have the least ground to expect that they shall approach any nearer to the unity of the faith.

But the most direct and effectual method they can possibly take to become united in sentiment, is practically to acknowledge the word of God to be the only infallible standard of truth and error. It is one thing to acknowledge the infallibility of Scripture in theory, and another to acknowledge it in practice. If we practically acknowledge the sacred guide, it will restrain us from paying a blind and partial deference to any human authority in matters of faith. There is no man, perhaps, who is not liable, in some cases, to swerve from the Scriptures of truth, through fear of offending, or through desire of pleasing those whom he esteems wiser and better than himself. This danger our Saviour foresaw, and forewarned his followers to guard against. "Call no man your father upon the earth." They must strictly regard this caution, if they would become united in their religious opinions. And if they do regard it, they will naturally meet upon the same ground, and adopt the same sentiments. The Bible is a magnet, which will necessarily draw all men to the same point, if they will only yield to its attractive influence. Let them only think, and speak, and walk, by the same rule, and they will become perfectly united in sentiment and practice, without the least condescension to each other.

Digitized by Google

There are various considerations, which urge Christians to pursue these plain and easy methods of cultivating such a sentimental union among themselves. It will directly tend to unite them in affection. We find that those who agree in their speculations upon any art, or science, commonly feel a mutual attachment, arising from their concurrence in opinion. And a unity of faith never fails to produce a mutual esteem and affection among Christians. Though some profess an unlimited catholicism, yet they, as well as others, appear to be the most intimately and affectionately united with those with whom they are best united in sentiment. Universal observation and experience, in this case, speak louder than words; and compel us to believe that mutual affection will naturally flow from mutual agreement in opinion. Let Christians be of one mind, and they will be of one heart. Let them think alike and speak alike, and they will lay aside their prejudice, their discord, their alienation of affection, and become in reality a band of brothers. This is confirmed by the sure word of prophecy, which predicts the future peace and harmony of the church, as resulting from the knowledge of the truth. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." "The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth. Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion."

In the mean time, by uniting in sentiment, Christians will not only prepare themselves for the latter day glory of the church, but remove one of the strongest prejudices of unbelievers against the Bible. They make a very ill use of that diversity of opinions which they discover among the professed friends of divine revelation. They pretend to reject the Bible, because they cannot understand it. They say, if it had any plain and consistent meaning, those who believe it to be divine, would explain it in the same manner, and derive from it the

Digitized by Google

same doctrines. And since the professors of the gospel themselves, make it mean any thing, every thing, or nothing, they say they choose to reject it, and adhere to the plain and intelligible book of nature, which speaks the same language to all, and which cannot be corrupted, or misinterpreted, by ignorant or designing men. But, however unjust this mode of thinking and speaking is, Christians are under peculiar obligation to remove the occasion of it, by uniting in the belief and profession of the first principles of the oracles of God.

And by doing this, they will not only stop the mouths of cavillers, but at the same time, strengthen and animate one another, in promoting the cause of Christ. When they are united in the belief of the same truths, and in the pursuit of the same objects, they will appear formidable to the unbelieving world; and convince them of their folly as well as guilt, in opposing a cause which will certainly prevail, and triumph over all opposition. Many are ready to imagine that the cause of religion will fail, just like the cause of particular denominations of Christians. They know that one sect has flourished and triumphed for a while, and then gradually decayed and become extinct; and they expect that all denominations will share the same fate, and Christianity itself be erased from the earth. But if Christians were united in the truth, they would destroy these vain hopes and expectations of the ungodly, and feel a peculiar courage and resolution to use every effort to bring mankind to the obedience of faith. They are entreated, therefore, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to become of one mind; that they may, with one heart and one hand, promote his cause and interest in the world.

Now, my brethren, may we who are "stewards of the mysteries of God," apply this interesting subject to ourselves. Let us remember that we must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, who will expose and condemn every one of our errors, before the assembled universe; for he has told us that "every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." The apostle Paul also assures us that men's principles will be brought into view, and either approved or condemned, in the great day of decision. "I have laid the foundation; — but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which



Digitized by Google

is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." It is our interest as well as duty, to come to the light, and renounce every false sentiment which we have ever embraced. If we believe the truth, if we love the truth, if we preach the truth, it will afford us peculiar consolation in the close of life, and enable each of us to say, in the nearest view of eternity, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them that love his appearing." Amen.

Digitized by Google

# SERMON XX.

## SYSTEMATIC KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOSPEL.

PREACHED BEFORE THE NORFOLK AUXILIARY EDUCATION SOCIETY, AT DORCHESTER, JUNE 11, 1817.

---

**Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me.—2 Timothy 1: 13.**

WHILE Paul was passing through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches, he came to Lystra, where he found a certain disciple, named Timothy, who was highly esteemed by the Christian brethren in that city. This recommended him to the notice and acquaintance of the apostle; who, being fully persuaded of his unfeigned piety and promising talents, determined to take him with him, and prepare him, by proper instruction, to preach the gospel. Timothy gratefully received and wisely improved this precious privilege, made great proficiency in theological knowledge, and soon became acquainted with the whole scheme of religious sentiments which the apostle embraced and taught. This is more than intimated in the words I have read. "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me." The gospel which Paul understood, believed and preached, contains the whole plan of redemption, which was formed in the divine mind before the foundation of the world. And though the first principles of this scheme of grace lie scattered through all the sacred pages, yet they are all inseparably connected, and compose one consistent and complete system of divine truths. This form of sound words, or rather this system



Digitized by Google

of sound doctrines, the apostle taught Timothy, and exhorted him to hold fast, as a necessary and indispensable qualification for the gospel ministry. The opinion and practice of the apostle in this instance, naturally leads us to conclude,

That a systematical knowledge of the gospel is still necessary, to qualify other pious young men, as well as Timothy, for the same sacred office.

This single point I shall endeavor to support and illustrate by the following observations.

First: Young men who are preparing for the ministry, should understand the harmony and connection which run through all the peculiar and essential doctrines of the gospel. These are so intimately connected, that they cannot be clearly understood, separately considered. Who can understand moral depravity, without understanding moral virtue? Who can understand the nature of regeneration, without understanding the nature of true holiness? Who can understand the doctrine of justification, without understanding the doctrine of atonement? Who can understand the doctrine of atonement, without understanding the doctrine of vindictive justice? Who can understand the doctrine of vindictive justice, without understanding the nature and demerit of sin? Or who can understand the nature of the divine government over all the moral world, without knowing the nature of moral agency in all moral beings? All these doctrines are plainly and confessedly contained in the gospel, in some sense or other. I do not presume to say in what sense they are to be understood; but I do not hesitate to say, they ought to be understood in a sense, which renders them harmonious and consistent with each other. If a preacher understands one doctrine of the gospel in a sense which is inconsistent with the sense in which he understands another doctrine of the gospel, it is as certain that he misunderstands one or both of those doctrines, as it is that the gospel is true; for if the gospel be true, it is equally true that all its doctrines are perfectly harmonious and consistent, and must appear so when rightly understood. Many have undertaken to preach the gospel without having a systematical knowledge of its fundamental principles; but they have never failed of running into gross contradictions, which were too apparent not to be perceived by their attentive and intelligent hearers. There

Digitized by Google

is scarcely any point in which preachers are more apt to fail, than in point of consistency. So far as they are ignorant of that system of doctrines which the gospel contains, just so far they will preach inconsistently, and contradict at one time what they have said at another. It is utterly impracticable to exhibit one doctrine or duty of Christianity, with propriety and consistency, without a systematic knowledge of the first principles of the oracles of God. As the most pious and ingenious young man cannot have a proper understanding of the harmony and connection which exists among all the peculiar doctrines of the gospel without a systematic knowledge of them, so it is highly necessary that he should possess this systematic knowledge, before he undertakes to preach the great doctrines and duties of Christianity.

Secondly: A systematical knowledge of the principal doctrines of the Bible is necessary, in order to understand and explain the true meaning of the Scriptures in general. All, who have read and studied the word of God with serious and critical attention, have found a great many passages which they could not easily explain, in a clear and consistent manner. It is true, indeed, that some very ingenious and learned men have written criticisms, expositions and commentaries upon the Bible. But let a young student in divinity consult any of these expositors, and he will probably find, that they have created about as many and as great difficulties, as they have removed; and after all, he must resort to some other method, in order to discover the true meaning of the sacred writers. Here then it may be asked, To what better method can he resort? I will not say in this case, as a learned professor of theology says, he must resort solely to the Bible to explain itself. This appears to be absurd. If the Bible explains itself, one would be apt to conclude that it contains no difficult passages, which need to be explained. One passage of Scripture cannot explain another, because every passage is equally true in its proper sense. Suppose all the seemingly contradictory passages of Scripture were placed in two opposite columns, how could this serve to explain either column? For the point to be decided is not this; whether one column be true, and the other false; because both, being divinely inspired, must be equally true in their real and proper meaning. It is granted that the historical and classical knowl-



Digitized by Google

edge of a young student, may enable him to explain such difficulties in Scripture as arise from the customs, or manners, or laws, or languages, or religions of ancient times and nations; but this knowledge will afford him no assistance in explaining such difficulties as arise from passages of apparently conflicting sentiments. Hence arises the necessity of having some acknowledged and infallible standard, with which all passages of Scripture that appear to contradict each other in sense, may be compared, and their true meaning ascertained. And such a standard is every essential doctrine of the gospel. For we know that, if the gospel be true, there can no genuine passage of Scripture be found, which really carries a meaning repugnant to it. It may be taken for granted, that there is not a single text in the Bible, that has a meaning which is really inconsistent with the doctrine of true benevolence, or with the doctrine of human depravity, or with the doctrine of regeneration, or with the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, or with God's ultimate end in the creation of the world. All the first principles of the gospel are infallible criterions, by which to ascertain the sense of all dark, difficult, doubtful passages of Scripture. And this mode of interpreting the sacred oracles, is agreeable to common sense, and to the common practice of the best interpreters of human laws. Our wise and learned judges, in interpreting the laws of the land and their legal authorities, always appeal to one or more of the first principles of law, as their infallible guide in deciding the most difficult, intricate, and important causes. And for my part, I know of no expositor of Scripture, whether ancient or modern, whether of this or that denomination of Christians, who does not explain detached passages according to some first principle of his own system of divinity. It now appears, we trust, that those who are preparing for the ministry, cannot be duly qualified for their important work, without acquiring a systematical knowledge of the primary truths of the gospel; which is absolutely necessary in order to become able expositors of the sacred volume.

Thirdly: Young men, who are preparing for the ministry, should have a systematical knowledge of the gospel, that they may be able to guard themselves against the religious errors to which they are peculiarly exposed. If they go forth to preach

Digitized by Google

the gospel before they have formed any well-digested system of religious sentiments in their own minds, they will be continually exposed to be carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive. Mankind, who naturally prefer religious error to religious truth, have always used their influence to corrupt the sentiments of their public teachers. The sinners in Zion "said to the seers, see not; and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things; prophesy deceits." The same spirit led the same people to employ all their power and art, to draw Christ and the apostles into the most fatal errors. Paul knew that young Timothy would be surrounded by such men as Phygellus and Hermogenes, Hymeneus and Philetus, who had erred concerning the truth, and had actually overthrown the faith of some; and in the view of their corrupting influence, he gave him the seasonable admonition in the text, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me." The offence of the cross has not yet ceased. The men of the world still hate the pure doctrines of the gospel; and though they use less violence, yet they employ more art to corrupt the principles of their public instructors. There are as many corrupt teachers now, as there were in the apostle's day; and a great many more corrupt authors. With both these sources of corruption young preachers must be acquainted; and by both they will be shaken from their steadfastness, unless they are previously well grounded and established in the pure and peculiar doctrines of the gospel. Their intellectual acumen and classical knowledge alone will be but feeble weapons to repel the eloquent sophistry of corrupt preachers, and the more deep and subtile arguments of corrupt authors. But after they have critically studied the Scriptures, in the use of good commentators, and formed a consistent system of theology, under able and evangelical instructors, then they are prepared to converse with the most corrupt men, and to read the most corrupt authors, and compare their sentiments with an infallible standard. Then they can distinctly, and almost instantaneously perceive what agrees or disagrees with the great and essential doctrines of the gospel, which are the touchstone of truth and error; and so be able to repel all assaults upon their orthodoxy, by the most ingenious and

Digitized by Google

learned corrupters. Any man who has acquired a systematical knowledge of grammar, can in a moment discover a grammatical mistake. Any man who has acquired a systematical knowledge of logic, can instantly discover a logical error in reasoning. And any man who has acquired a consistent system of theology, can as easily and instantaneously discover any sentiment which contradicts the analogy of Scripture. It was such a systematical knowledge of the gospel, that enabled Paul and Timothy to keep the faith, and preserve themselves from the corrupting influence of both Jews and Gentiles. And it is extremely precipitate and dangerous for any young men to presume to preach the gospel in the face of a frowning, erroneous, and corrupting world, until they have acquired this impenetrable shield.

Fourthly: It is necessary that those who are preparing for the ministry should have a systematical knowledge of the gospel, in order to be able to refute as well as to avoid religious errors. Ministers are set for the defence of the gospel. It is their official duty to defend their people, as well as themselves, against false teachers and false doctrines. Christ warned the apostles to beware of false prophets, who come in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravening wolves. Paul warned the elders of Ephesus to take heed unto themselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers; because he knew that grievous wolves would attempt to enter in among them, not sparing the flock. And he told Titus that a bishop must "hold fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, — whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." It is the duty of ministers not only to preach and inculcate the truth, but to combat and refute error. Christ pointed a great part of his preaching against the false doctrines and superstitions of the Scribes and Pharisees, who taught for doctrines the commandments of men. The true prophets attacked, refuted, and censured the gross errors and delusions of the false prophets, with the utmost plainness and severity. And Paul employed his superior learning and talents in preaching and writing against the vain phi-

Digitized by Google

losophy of the heathen moralists, and the absurd doctrines of the Judaizing teachers, and the fatal errors of apostate Christians. The corrupt sentiments which are propagated by conversing, preaching, or writing, cannot be effectually refuted by merely quoting and explaining particular passages of Scripture; for sectarians commonly have Scripture at their tongue's end; and are very expert at quoting and commenting upon particular texts, which they imagine favor and support their peculiar notions. The most proper and effectual method to stop their mouths, and carry conviction to their understandings, is to bring their tenets to some fundamental doctrine of the gospel which is mutually allowed to be infallibly true, and determine whether their peculiar notions agree or disagree with it. I presume my brethren in the ministry have often found this to be the only method to stop the mouths of vain talkers and gainsayers. And all polemical writers of eminence have successfully employed this method, to refute their most candid, ingenious, and learned adversaries. A systematical knowledge of the essential doctrines of the gospel arms a preacher at all points, to meet, repel, and convince those who propagate opinions that are false and fatal to the souls of men. In this view, it is extremely important that those who are preparing for the ministry, at this day of abounding error, should be well versed in the gospel system of sound divinity.

Fifthly: A systematical knowledge of the gospel is no less necessary, in order to qualify pious young men to preach both the doctrines and duties of Christianity, in the most plain, instructive, and profitable manner. To instruct his hearers ought to be the constant aim of the preacher; for unless they are instructed, they cannot be profited by his preaching. But, in order to preach instructively from time to time, his mind must be fraught with a rich fund of theological knowledge, which is well digested and fit for use. Christ said, "Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." And Paul said to Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." To become a preacher of this character, a young man must be able to distinguish one doctrine of the gospel from another, one duty

Digitized by Google

of the gospel from another, and one Christian grace from another; and to preach upon each Christian doctrine, each religious duty, and each gracious affection, with clearness and consistency; so as to make every hearer see his own character, and feel his own obligation to be and do what God requires. But no preacher can thus rightly divide the word of truth, and feed his people with knowledge and understanding, without having a systematical knowledge of the doctrinal and practical truths of the gospel. A minister may preach ten, or twenty, or forty years, and always preach a new sermon upon a new text; and yet leave his people as ignorant of his own sentiments, and of the peculiar doctrines and duties of Christianity, as they were when they heard him preach his first sermon. There is a certain superficial, desultory manner of preaching about the Bible, and about the most peculiar and precious truths contained in it, which may please, but cannot enlighten, convince, convert, nor edify a people. Some may adopt this mode of preaching from one cause, and some from another. Some may preach so, with a view to please their people. Some may preach so, for the purpose of concealing their sentiments. And some may preach so, because they have no consistent scheme of sentiments digested in their own minds. This last is probably the most common cause of uninstructive, unimpressive, and unprofitable preaching. The regular artificer acts as systematically in framing the plainest, as the most complicated and curious parts of a large and elegant edifice. So the preacher, who is a workman, treats one subject as systematically as another, whether it be sentimental or practical. All the duties of the gospel are founded upon the doctrines of the gospel, and ought to be explained and inculcated upon gospel principles. I would not, however, be understood to mean that a minister ought always, or even generally, to preach doctrinally, in distinction from preaching practically and experimentally. If, however, a young man begins to preach upon the duties of the gospel, he will be very apt to neglect preaching upon the doctrines of the gospel. But if he begins to preach upon the doctrines of the gospel, he will naturally be led to preach upon the duties of the gospel. The reason is, the duties of the gospel naturally flow from the doctrines of the gospel, and come in course in preaching upon them; but the doctrines of the gospel do not naturally flow

Digitized by Google

from the duties of the gospel, nor come in course in preaching upon them. If a child begins to read before he has learned to spell, he will be very loath to go back and learn what he ought to have learned. So, if a young man at first forms a habit of preaching practically, he will find a peculiar reluctance and difficulty in forming a habit of preaching sentimentally afterwards. But if he sets out in preaching sentimentally, he will naturally go forward and preach practically and usefully. Indeed, this is the course which he will spontaneously pursue, if he has previously acquired a systematical knowledge of the gospel; for he will clearly perceive the propriety and importance of preaching all Christian doctrines and duties in their proper order, harmony, and connection. We feel no hazard, therefore, in asserting that a systematical knowledge of the gospel is as necessary in order to form a plain, practical, and profitable preacher, as to form a consistent, thorough, and deep divine.

It now remains to point out some things which seem naturally to flow from the subject which we have been considering; and which appear both important in themselves, and appropriate to the present occasion.

The first thing suggested by the subject is, that there can be no reasonable objection against all human systems of divinity. These are very much decried and condemned at the present day, as not only useless, but even detrimental to the cause of truth. Many declaim against all bodies of divinity, whether they contain doctrines, in their view, either spiritual or unscriptural. But if it be desirable and important, to have clear, distinct, and consistent ideas of the first principles of the oracles of God, then it seems equally desirable and necessary, to have these first principles linked into the form of systems, summaries, or confessions of faith. The great and primary truths of Christianity are as capable of being systematized, as the primary principles of any other art or science. And it is hardly conceivable that any man, who really desires to understand the Holy Scriptures, should not desire to see the primary and most important truths contained in the Bible, collected and digested into a harmonious and consistent system. This has certainly been the general desire of all denominations of Christians. It is well known that there were systems of divinity, or

Digitized by Google

formularies of faith, composed in the early days of Christianity, and they have always been continued in use ever since. The first reformers from Popery published their creeds and confessions of faith. The Episcopalians in England drew up and established thirty-nine articles. Those who dissented from that church, formed the Assembly's Catechism. And all sectarians of any note have gone into the same practice. But here, perhaps, it is more proper to remove objections, than to advance arguments.

It is said, that systems of divinity tend to promote religious controversies, which are highly prejudicial to practical religion. But it is very evident, that they do not give rise to religious disputes, because religious disputes have always given rise to them. If Christians had never differed in their religious opinions, they would never have had occasion to throw their peculiar sentiments into the form of a system. The truth is, systems of divinity have been generally composed for the very purpose of putting a stop to religious controversies, and of uniting Christians in believing and speaking the same things upon religious subjects.

It is said, that systems of divinity tend to prevent men from forming any real opinions of their own, and to infringe upon their right of private judgment. This consequence no more flows from reading systematical writings, than from reading any other books, or attending upon any other theological instructions. The reason is, that a man's opinions are as much his own if he derives them from another, as if he derives them from his own research or examination. No man can be said to have a real opinion upon any subject, which is not derived from evidence; and if it be derived from evidence, it is totally immaterial whether he derives the evidence from his own investigation, or from conversation, or from reading, or from public or private instruction. Did Timothy's reading the Scriptures when he was a child, and his hearing the apostle preach and converse afterwards, infringe upon his right of private judgment, or prevent his forming his own system of sound words?

It is said, that systems of divinity are often the engines of designing men, and intended to propagate error, instead of truth. It is not denied, that theological systems may have

Digitized by Google

been designed and employed, to serve such an evil purpose. But it must be acknowledged, on the other hand, that they may have been designed and employed to counteract the baneful influence of error, and to promote the cause of truth. It is indeed, difficult to ascertain exactly what influence ancient systems of divinity had upon the primitive churches; but we have good evidence, that more modern theological creeds and systems have had a very extensive and salutary influence upon the interests of pure Christianity. The systems, which were formed at, and after the reformation from Popery, have done signal service to the Protestant world. The Thirty-nine Articles of the Episcopal church have been a great barrier against the gross and fatal errors, which have been embraced and propagated by great and learned divines in England. This opinion of systems is now fast reviving and spreading among the most evangelical and useful theologians in the British nation: I mean the authors and patrons of the Christian Observer. These men are zealously engaged in opposing the perverters of the true sense of the Thirty-nine Articles. It must be allowed that the Assembly's Catechism has had a great influence in forming the religious sentiments of the people in New England; and many will believe, that its influence has been as good as it has been great and extensive. All that can be justly said in this case is, that the best things may be perverted; but this is not valid reason for condemning and rejecting the best things. No man, I believe, ever has formed, or ever can form, a consistent scheme or system of divinity from the Bible alone, without the aid of some systematical writer, or instructor. It is devoutly to be wished, that neither systems of divinity, nor creeds and confessions of faith, should be indiscriminately and universally discarded; but that they should be duly estimated, and properly improved. Again,

If the leading sentiment in this discourse has been sufficiently supported, we must conclude that it is generally improper for those to undertake to preach the gospel, who have never acquired a systematical knowledge of it. There have been a great many instances of lay preachers. Some have gone from the plow, some from the shop, some from the counter, some from the lancet, and some from the bar, to the desk. This has been commonly owing to a low opinion of the gospel,



Digitized by Google

or to a high opinion of themselves. We have no doubt, however, but that many of these lay preachers have been well-meaning men; we have no doubt but that some of them have been possessed of superior talents and learning; and we have no doubt but that in some instances, they have been useful and distinguished ministers and divines. But such instances have been very rare, and will not justify us in approving and encouraging self-taught teachers in general. They are commonly destitute of clear and comprehensive views of the gospel, and convey more heat than light, to their hearers. Nor is this the worst; for we have reason to fear, that they sometimes endeavor to make others, as well as themselves, believe that they are supernaturally taught and assisted; and under this impression, they have often led their votaries into the most absurd and dangerous error, superstition, and enthusiasm. Nor have more ingenious and learned laymen done less injury to true religion. Relying upon their classical, philosophical, and metaphysical knowledge, they have often employed their superior abilities in opposing and corrupting the most essential doctrines of the gospel. Such ingenious, self-taught, self-sufficient novices in divinity may be found not only in Europe, but in America, and even in Massachusetts. These men seem to forget, that preaching is an art, and an art which requires to be as distinctly, learnedly, and systematically studied, as any other art or science; and that the knowledge of any other art or science will not prepare a man, of the best heart and of the best talents, to preach the gospel plainly and profitably. It is one thing to exhort, and another to preach; it is one thing to learn the words, and another to learn the doctrines of Scripture; it is one thing to know the gospel as a Christian, and another to know it as a divine. This idea ought to be deeply impressed upon the minds of all pious young men, who are looking forward to the great work of the gospel ministry.

In the view of this subject, we may learn how such young men ought to begin their theological studies. Professor Campbell, in his ingenious and elegant Lectures on Systematic Theology, recommends to his students in divinity, to begin their theological studies by reading, collating, and criticizing upon the Scriptures without the aid of human systems, commentaries, and polemical writings. After discarding the term orthodox, as

Digitized by Google

unmeaning and absurd, he represents his pupil as inquiring, "Would you then lay aside systems altogether, as useless, or even dangerous?" He replies: "By no means. But I am not for beginning with them." He goes on: "But then it will be said, If the Scriptures are to be our first study, will it not be necessary that, even in reading them, we take the aid of some able commentator? Perhaps I shall appear somewhat singular in my way of thinking, when I tell you in reply, that I would not have you at first recur to them. Do not mistake me, as though I meant to signify that there is no good to be had from commentaries. I am far from judging thus of commentaries in general, any more than of systems. But neither are proper for the beginner, whose object it is impartially to seek out the mind of the Spirit, and not to imbibe the scheme of any dogmatist. But in reading the Scriptures, when difficulties occur, what are we to do, or what can we do better, than immediately recur to some eminent interpreter? Perhaps the answer I am going to give, will appear astonishing, as I know it is unusual. If you are not able with the strictest attention and reflection to solve the difficulty yourself, do not make it a rule to seek an immediate solution of it from some other quarter. Have patience; and as you grow acquainted with the scope of the whole by frequent and attentive reading, you will daily find fewer difficulties; they will vanish of themselves. The more perspicuous parts will insensibly reflect a light upon the more obscure. If you have the helps to be obtained from history, geography, the knowledge of the manners and polity of the people, which in effect are perfectly coincident with the study of the language, and which may be all comprehended in these two sources, *sacred history and biblical philology*, you will be daily fitter for being interpreters yourselves." Now, I readily grant that it would be proper for young men to begin their theological studies as the learned Professor proposes, if classical and biblical knowledge be all that is necessary in order to understand the doctrines of divine revelation. But this cannot be conceded. The knowledge of sacred history and biblical philology is very different from the proper knowledge of divinity. The knowledge of the technical terms in physic is very different from the proper knowledge of the medical art. The knowledge of the technical terms in law is very different from the knowl-

Digitized by Google

edge of the law itself. Though a young man should learn not only the languages in which the Bible was originally written, but all the customs, manners, laws, and religions of the various nations to which the sacred writers often allude; yet this knowledge would be very different from the proper knowledge of divinity, which essentially consists in the knowledge of the great and fundamental truths of divine revelation. The study of sacred history and biblical philology is rather a preparation for the study of divinity, than the study of divinity itself. It is hardly proper to say that a young man begins to study divinity, until he begins to study the first principles of the oracles of God in a systematical manner; and the most ingenious and best classical scholar will find himself incompetent to study divinity systematically, without the aid of some systematical writer, or systematical instructor.

In the next place: It appears from what has been said, that both an academical and theological education is highly necessary to qualify pious young men for the work of the ministry. The knowledge of the arts and sciences, of civil and ecclesiastical history, as well as a skill in the learned languages, is absolutely requisite to form an accomplished preacher. But it is, however, a serious question, whether young students in divinity may not pay too much attention to scientific and biblical learning, to the neglect of more important theological knowledge. This species of learning is rather ornamental than useful, to ministers in general. It is true, indeed, they may sometimes find it to be of peculiar advantage in meeting their learned adversaries, and repelling them with their own weapons. But I believe that every scriptural doctrine of importance may be discovered, understood, and maintained without much critical learning. Dr. Brown, in his remarks upon the Earl of Shaftesbury's Characteristics, challenges him to produce any translation of the Bible, which does not fairly contain all the great and essential doctrines of divine revelation. If this be true, it seems that classical and biblical knowledge is not so absolutely necessary for a preacher as some have represented. Besides, sacred criticism has no end. It opens a field too wide for any man completely to traverse. How many volumes of criticism have been written upon these words? — "There are three that bear record in heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy

Digitized by Google

Ghost; and these three are one." But after all that has been said, by the ablest critics, for and against the authenticity of this passage, both sides are obliged to sit down in a degree of darkness and doubt. I would not, however, discourage young students in divinity from acquiring biblical knowledge; but I would have them reflect, that this alone will never make them profound divines. In order to arrive at this attainment, they must acquire theological as well as classical knowledge. They have as much need of studying theology, after they have gone through their classical studies, in order to prepare themselves for the work of the ministry, as other young men have of studying law, or physic, after they have left the university, in order to prepare themselves for either of these professions. Many pious and ingenious young men have gone almost immediately from the college to the pulpit. But I doubt not that they have often regretted their rashness and precipitancy. It has probably prevented the usefulness of some, and injured the health, if not destroyed the lives of others. It is of the last importance, that those young men who are looking forward to the ministry, should possess that human and divine knowledge, which is previously necessary to render them both able and faithful ministers of the New Testament.

The whole train of the observations which have been made in this discourse, now converge to a single point; and unitedly press the important duty of assisting pious and promising youths, to furnish their minds with that literary and theological knowledge which is indispensably necessary to prepare them for the gospel ministry. Among the numerous young men who are annually finishing their public education, the great majority are destitute of the first and most essential qualification for the sacred office; and accordingly they choose to turn their attention to what they deem more reputable and lucrative employments. This has, at length, awakened the public attention to the importance of aiding indigent youths of promising piety and talents, in qualifying themselves to preach the gospel of Christ, and promote the salvation of sinners. A society was formed several years ago, consisting of numerous branches, for the purpose of sending preachers among the poor Pagans of the Eastern world. That society has been very industrious and successful in obtaining large sums from the generous public, to

Digitized by Google

assist them in pursuing their pious and important object. But whoever seriously and impartially considers the present state of our own nation, in respect to a famine of the word, will be fully convinced that able and faithful ministers are as much needed in this country, as in any other quarter of the globe. If the calculations which have been lately made, respecting the vast numbers in this land who are destitute of the preaching and ordinances of the gospel, be just, or very nearly just, there is a loud call for the increase of faithful laborers in this part of the vineyard of Christ. We cannot reasonably expect to be properly supplied with scribes well instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, unless great and peculiar exertions are made to assist indigent youth of real piety and good abilities, to furnish themselves for the great and good work in which they ardently wish to be employed. We, my brethren, have weighty motives, to pursue with ardor and zeal the very benevolent and important design in which we have voluntarily engaged. And among many other motives, it is a very consoling and animating one, that we are united with the Parent Society, in promoting an object of vast magnitude which does not militate against the Bible Societies, the Tract Societies, the Moral Societies, or the Massachusetts Missionary Society; but which directly tends to carry into effect all their benevolent purposes. And though it should divert or lessen some of the great and numerous streams of public charity, which have been flowing into the wide channel of the Foreign Missionary Society; yet it must greatly assist the members of that respectable body, by raising up the best qualified instruments to carry their great design into effect. Besides, we must suppose that they have no wish to neglect our destitute brethren, for the sake of sending the gospel to those far distant nations; from whom European Christians have derived, and are still deriving their exorbitant wealth; and to whom they are under peculiar obligations to send the gospel. It is of the first importance, that we should evangelize the heathen in our own country, and others who are fast falling into a more deplorable condition than ignorant and unbelieving Pagans. When those who have had a Christian education apostatize, and become infidels, they are generally more malignant enemies to the gospel and the cause of Christ, than the most benighted and bigoted heathens. Let us then lift up our

Digitized by Google

eyes, and look on the fields, which are white already to the harvest. Let us hear the voice of millions of our countrymen, who are calling upon us, with the utmost importunity, to raise up, and qualify, and send faithful laborers among them. Though we are, at present, weak in numbers and in wealth, and must move very slowly in our benevolent exertions, yet we may lay a firm and permanent foundation for the most beneficial and extensive effects, for years and ages to come. Our fathers spared no pains nor expense, to provide for us a learned and faithful ministry; and shall not this consideration inspire us with a pious and noble ambition to follow their example, and to do all in our power for the instruction and salvation of those who are coming after us? The God of our fathers, in answer to their prayers, has increased our numbers, our wealth, and our civil, religious, and literary advantages as a nation, above all human calculations; by which he has laid us under the most endearing obligations of gratitude, to him and to them, to promote his cause, which lay the nearest to their hearts. We have come upon the stage in the most eventful period in the history of man. The widest field for usefulness is open before us, which invites, solicits, and demands our most vigorous and benevolent exertions, in the most glorious and important cause that ever engaged the attention of this, or any other nation. While error, superstition, idolatry, and infidelity have laid waste the churches of Christ in the old world, we are imperiously called upon to cherish and maintain the sinking cause of Zion, among a people who have been saved of the Lord for the very purpose, we hope, of preparing the way for the universal spread of holiness and happiness among the many millions of our guilty race, who are perishing for the lack of vision. Is it not a privilege to employ our time, our labor, our property, and our prayerful influence, in coöperating with our fellow Christians, in spreading the Redeemer's kingdom, and bringing home many sons unto glory? To beg, I am ashamed; but I am bold in obedience to the apostle, to "charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." Amen.

Digitized by Google

Milk. Page 304. + [illegible] 293.
[illegible] Page 365.
[illegible] Salvation & total Depravity Page 312.
[illegible] 113. 320.
[illegible] 317.
[illegible] 325+
[illegible] 327.
[illegible] 335.
[illegible]
[illegible] 363.
[illegible]
[illegible] 411. [illegible]
[illegible] 12[illegible]
[illegible]

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Extemporaneous preaching

Seeing the
Unitarian
A sincere
Whatever
milk P. 233.
Brotherly


# General Theological Library

53 MOUNT VERNON STREET, BOSTON

## BOOK RULES

Ordinary books are issued for three weeks, new books for two weeks. Three-week books may be renewed for three weeks, two-week books for one week, upon application in person or by postal.

Two days allowed on books sent to a distance.

Assessment for delay, two cents a day each book.

Books returned by mail or express must have **thick** and secure wrappings.

| NUMBER OF TAKER | WHEN TAKEN | THIS BOOK DUE | RENEWED TO |
|---|---|---|---|
| 387 | FEB 14 | MAR -8 | |
| 387 | OCT 27 | NOV 17 | |

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google